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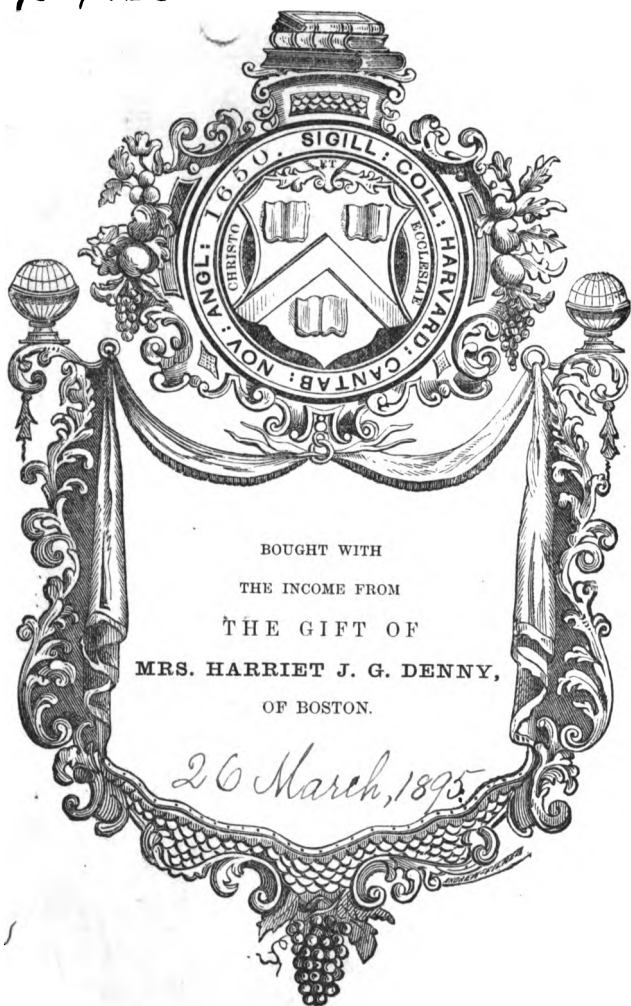
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The Three Tales of
The Three Priests of Peebles

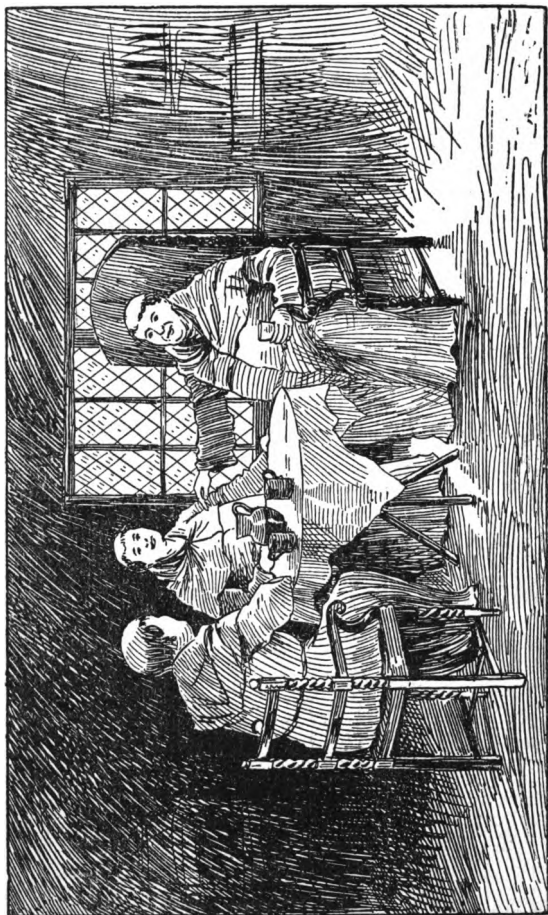


BY Clement Bryce Gunn M. D.

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THE THREE TALES
OF THE
THREE PRIESTS OF PEEBLES

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS & COPIOUS NOTES.

Rendered from the Ancient Scots Vernacular into
Modern Scottish by

CLEMENT BRYCE GUNN, M.D. (*Ed.*)

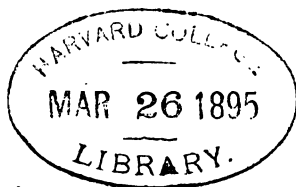
AUTHOR OF "LAYS OF ST. ANDREWS."

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Denny fund.



DEDICATION.



**Conjugi dilectissimæ.
Hoc opusculum.**

ILLUSTRATIONS.

		PAGE
✓	FRONTISPIECE, - - - - -	<i>Facing Title</i>
	SEAL OF THE BURGH OF PEBBLES, - - - -	2
✓	CROSS CHURCH, - - - - -	10
✓	TWO RED FRIARS, - - - - -	16
✓	TOWN CROSS, - - - - -	20
✓	NEIDPATH CASTLE, - - - - -	44
✓	BARNS TOWER, - - - - -	72
✓	SAINT NICHOLAS, - - - - -	88
✓	TOWN WALL, - - - - -	96

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFATORY NOTE,	9
PEBBLES IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY,	11
INTRODUCTION,	17
TALE THE FIRST,	21
TALE THE SECOND,	45
TALE THE THIRD,	68
DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE POEM,	89
NOTES EXPLANATORY OF THE TEXT,	97



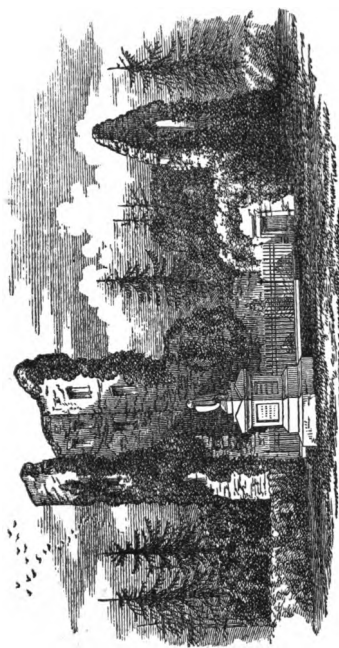
PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS poem, written probably about the latter half of the fifteenth century by an unknown author, may, along with the coeval poem, "Peebles to the Play," be termed a Classic of Peebles. Although of such respectable antiquity, and presumably a production of the locality, the work is all but unknown in the place which gives it name, and no copy exists in its library. Had the poem been generally accessible, however, its obsolete words and phrases, still further obscured by quaint orthography, would have debarred all but students of mediæval literature from an intelligent comprehension of its scope and meaning.

In the "History of Peeblesshire," Dr William Chambers refers to the work in eulogistic terms, and regrets the fact of its being so little known. It was this notice which first made the present editor acquainted with so interesting a relic of the literature of the Middle Ages. He desires in turn to make its subject-matter more widely diffused; and to reveal, in comprehensible form, to his fellow-townsmen more especially, their inheritance down through the centuries. The tales are of sustained interest to the end; they abound in quaint allusions to the civic life of the period, of which they afford many a curious glimpse, and are not without some practical lessons applicable to the present day.

Regarding the form which the tales have assumed in this volume, the editor is prepared for criticism. He had been advised to produce merely a reprint of the text from the most authentic sources, and add notes and vocabulary. This is the scholastic idea. His aim, however, has been to make a readable and popular rendering of the tales, which can be understood and enjoyed without the interrupting breaks in the continuity of the story, which are the result of footnotes and vocabulary. Every obscure word has been translated into its modern equivalent; the metre has been rendered uniform and consonant with the new setting to the tales, and copious contemporary notes supplement the text. These would have been much less complete but for the valuable and interesting researches made among the ancient documents of Peebles by my friend Mr Renwick, of the City Chambers, Glasgow. The archives of the burgh form a singularly rich collection of mediæval incidents, domestic and ecclesiastical, and Mr Renwick deserves well of his fellow-townsmen for thus laboriously bringing to light again the ancient life of the Border burgh.

C. B. G.



CROSS CHURCH OF PEEBLES.

THE THREE PRIESTS OF PEEBLES.

Peebles about the Year 1460.



REGARDING the following Tales, there is evidence, both of an internal and an external character, that they were probably written about the latter half of the fifteenth century. The ancient Royal Burgh of Peeblés was selected by the Author as the place where the Tales were related by the Three Priests to one another. And this leads one to enquire what kind of town Peebles of the time of James III. was.

From the evidence of charters and other documents, it has been established that Peebles was a Royal Burgh, as early, at least, as the reign of William the Lion; and that it possessed a Royal Castle, the frequent residence of Kings. The site of this Castle is the knoll upon which the Church now stands.

The Highgait extended then, as it does still, eastward from the Castle Hill, and possessed a North Raw and a South Raw of houses. At the back of these rows flowed then, and flow to-day, Peebles Water, and Tweed, respectively. These waters converge at the western extremity of the Castle Hill, forming between them an alluvial peninsular plateau, upon which the Highgait stands. Continuous dykes of stone and turf, replaced later by a fortified wall, enclosed that part of the town, into which access was obtained through the Northgait, the Briggait, the Eastgait, and the West Port. Some of the mediæval names which linger to this day indicate their ancient associations. Cunzie-neuk (coign) has evidently always been a corner. Dean's Wynd—House—Gutter—and Park, all refer to the residential Deans of Peebles under Glasgow. Saint Mungo's Well, in the Highgait, with its source upon Venlaw, carries one back to the cell, or church, which preceded Saint Andrew's Kirk. The White Stone (Quhyt Stane), on Innerleithen Road, and the now vanished Grey Stone, on Edinburgh Road, each marked a limit to which the Magistrates convoyed deputations and illustrious visitors upon their departure, and were the scenes of the drinking of the inevitable stirrup-cup and "bon vaille," for which the burgesses had to pay.

The Chapel of Saint Mary occupied the west end of the North Raw, and will be mentioned again.

Regarding the bridges, there is absolute certainty that at least two were either being repaired or erected

at this period. In 1465, there are references to works in progress at Tweed Bridge, and at the same period a bridge, probably of wood, spanned Peebles Water at the foot of Briggait.

Peebles appears to have been essentially an ecclesiastical seat, and this feature conferred a certain tone upon the Burgh.

Saint Andrew's Kirk, at the date of the Tales, was already of respectable antiquity—300 years, and was in its full glory and prosperity. Early in the succeeding century, it possessed a Provost, twelve Prebendaries, twelve altars, choristers, and extensive endowments.

The Church of the Holy Cross appears to have been the principal or only Conventual Establishment upon Tweed above Melrose. The Cross Church and Convent were now 200 years old. The buildings formed a quadrangle, of which the church occupied the south side—the total area being 108 feet by 124. The Tower does not appear to have been added until after the Reformation, when the length of the church was curtailed from 102 feet to 72, and galleries erected, on the church becoming converted from a conventual to a parochial one.

Seventy Trinity Friars formed the convent in the middle ages, and the relics of Saint Nicholas, the Bishop enshrined within the church, attracted pilgrimages of the faithful, and conferred celebrity and emolument upon the establishment and upon the town.

Saint Mary's Chapel, erected under charter of David II. was now a century old, and occupied the

west end of the North Raw. It had no steeple until 1488. An almshouse bearing the name apparently of Saint Leonard's adjoined the chapel.

The old town of Peebles formed the ecclesiastical quarter of the Burgh. Here were located the Prebendaries of Saint Andrew's, each having a chamber and a yard, and an acre of the kirklands. The mansion of the Abbot of Arbroath occupied the corner of the Marketplace at the west side of the Leidgate. This was a thoroughfare (now Young Street) leading to the Hills, and to the Ecclesiastical Close (Cross Road) connecting Saint Andrew's with Cross Church. The "Mercat Croce" at this period probably stood in the centre of the Marketplace in the Old Town, and opposite the aforesaid mansion. At a later date it was removed to the Eastgait. The original shaft, around which has surged the Burghal life of centuries, still survives in honourable retirement.

Peebles was anciently endowed with almost all the surrounding hill lands, as common lands. They formed a perennial source of covetousness and contention between the town's neighbours and the town. They were Kingsmuir, Cademuir, Hamildon, Venlaw, Glentress, with numerous smaller tracts. On these the burgesses grazed horses, oxen, and sheep; they pulled heather for thatching, cast peats for fuel, and dug turfs or fail for dykes. Upon Hamildon they reaped harvest.

In the fifteenth century there were evidently three mills:—The Auld Mill, upon Peebles Water, near the foot of Briggait; The Rood Mill on Tweed, on

south side of Castlehill, where a spinning mill now stands; and later a Waulk or Fulling Mill at the east end of Tweed green.

The Administrative Body was composed of three Bailies—there is, as yet, no mention of a Provost—also a Council or “Dousan,” having about a score of members; and the inquest, whose numbers also varied between 12 and 21.

To the burgesses pertained the exclusive right of trading in the burgh. In return they were bound to defend the town when called upon, and to pay stent or taxes. They were required to be fully equipped for war at the periodical “wapinschaws” (weapon-shows). Residence in the burgh was frequently insisted upon. Burgesses could only be made in full Court. The fees varied from 10s to 40s, and were frequently paid in kind or in labour. Examples are quoted in the notes.

These necessarily brief remarks must be understood as referring to the fifteenth century only, and will afford the reader some idea of the appearance of the town and its circumstances at the period when the poem is supposed to have been written. Most of the buildings of that day have vanished. A mere relic marks the spot where stood the parish kirk of Saint Andrew, with its twelve altars and large ecclesiastical establishment. The Cross Church, deprived of its conventual buildings, survives—a picturesque ruin. Some of the arches of Tweed Bridge, and the White Stone, are coeval with the poem. In

the immediate neighbourhood, the bell of Saint Gordian in Manor rings forth its peal to-day as it did in the time of the "Three Priests," and has done all down the centuries; and the ancient peel tower of Barns, as also the massive additions to the gaunt ruined keep at Neidpath, were being erected in their day. The everlasting hills environ the town, and look down upon it exactly as they did then; while the waters of Tweed and Peebles still flow on in summer drought and autumn spate, laving the modern, as they did the mediaeval, Burgh of Peebles.



TWO RED FRIARS.

Introduction to the Tales.



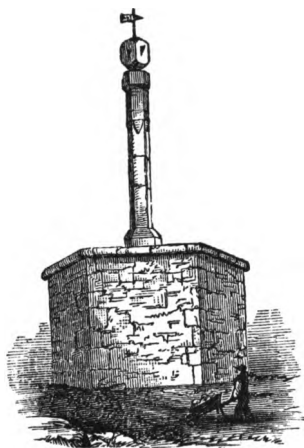
*Showing how Three Priests meet at a Collation in the
Town of Peebles, and how they proceed to tell
Tales.*

IN Peebles town, some time ago, as I have oft heard 1
tell,
On February's foremost day this history befell :
Three holy priests, from duty freed, unto collation
went,
And to a private place within the town their foot-
steps bent,
Where down they sat in merrie mood, right soft 5
and unfootsore,
For loved they not the noisy crowd, and hated its
uproar ;
And if the date I reckon fairly, then in sooth must
say,
Methinks it was the Festival of Saint Bride's holy
day.
And thus they sat, these merrie priests, full easily
and soft,
And merrie laughter rang throughout, and gaily 10
pealed aloft.

And know full well, good people all, these three
they made good cheer ;
For them, indeed, though fasting priests, no dainties
were too dear.
With three fat capons to begin, all butter-spread,
on spits,
And following these, in proper course, were sundry
diverse meats.
To wait upon their pious selves they had but one 15
small boy,
Because at seeing companie they kept themselves
right coy.
They did not like, these priestly three, to travel
through the towns
With idle folk, nor rabble too, nor yet with country
loons ;
But just among themselves they conversed, with their
comrades spoke,
Ev'n sometimes sadly for a space, at others, gay 20
with joke.
And now at rest to-day, beside a blazing fire they
sat,
Which roasted tender limb and flesh of capons in
their fat.
Before them soon a roundel-table, polished well, was
spread—
First cleanly wiped and set in midst, and with a
fine cloth laid ;
It was well set with naperie, the bread was in its 25
place,
And then the eldest priest, before partaking, said
the grace,
And blessed the bread, with upraised hand, and
Benedicite,

With *Dominus*, and *Amen* too, which means, So let
it be.
And when, may be, the three had drunk of home-
brewed ale a quart,
Then up spake one in manner thus, who Master 30
was of Art ;
And for his name, methinks you ask, then John
thus called was he—
So John spoke up, and said, “ My friends, since we
are here, priests three,
And want for naught in very truth, by Him who
made the moon ;
From us, I think, a merrie tale should now come
forth in tune.”
Then spake another in his turn, called Master 35
Archibald—
“ Now by the highest Heaven, quoth he, I’m satis-
fied and hold,
To tell a tale unto you both methinks I would not
tire,
Ev’n but to keep my restless feet from nigh this
blazing fire.”
Then spake the third, by name to all long known
as Sir William—
“ To clergy great I am unknown, and cannot count 40
a claim,
Nor yet am I a man of world, or travelled priest
as ye,
In many sundry foreign lands away beyond the
sea ;
Therefore I keep my place, and deem it neither
shame nor sin
For one of you, my comrades two, the first tale to
begin.”

"Here I protest at once," now spake out Master 45
Archibald,
"A travelled clerk and worldly priest, supposing I
be called.
Right rashly then, you may be sure, I never would
presume
To hold that I had travelled far unless to Mother
Rome ;
And so to tell a tale the first, decline I, and
propose
To tell the first tale Master John, we call upon 50
and choose ;
For he has been a travelled priest in many a
foreign land—
In Portugal far o'er the sea, and in Seville the
grand,
In countries five of Spain, and further even has he
been,
And of these lands four Christian are, and heathen
(*Granada*) one I ween ;
In Rome, too, has he been, and Flanders and in 55
Venice town,
And other diverse unknown countries, travelling up
and down.
And so because our worthy friend spoke first about
a tale,
Therefore the stories to begin, I think he should
not fail."
Then up speaks Master John at this, and cries out
"By the Rood,
Since I the story to begin, you both do now 60
conclude,
And I would never never wish that I did ye offend ;
The sooner then the tale begins the sooner will it end."



TOWN CROSS OF PEEBLES.

The First Tale

Told by Master John:

How the King summoned a People's Parliament in order to discuss sundry matters which were perplexing him.

A KING there was sometime ago, and likewise, too, 1
a Queen,
As many kings and queens before, within the land
had been.
This king ordained one day to meet a People's
Parliament,
And for the lords and nobles all throughout his
kingdom sent ;
And for the welfare of his realm and all its folks 5
to guide,
The three Estates, as duly warned, convened them-
selves betide.
The king unto his palace great then summoned all
the three
Of the estates within the realm, according to degree.
The bishops first with prelates all, and likewise the
abbots,
Their retinues of clerks and servants, and their born 10
varlots.

Into a hall, right large and high, and spacious, too,
you judge,
These prelates all and retinues right sumptuously
could lodge.
Then in a large and very fair and richly-fashioned
hall
He lodged in great magnificence the land's great
nobles all ;
And in a hall somewhat below, but that right fresh 15
and clean,
He harboured all his burgesses in comforts, rich and
bene (*well-to-do*).
So out of all these three estates, assembled all and
some,
In their three halls above described, he caused the
wisest come ;
And of their merrie cheer and feasting, why then
make I mair ?
They fared as well as any folk in all the land 20
might fare.

*I.—The King's Question to the Burgesses concerning the
reason why the families of Burgesses decay.*

The king unto his Burgesses right worthy came
himself ;
And now his very words to them I am about to tell,
And says, " Welcome, my burgesses, my sturdy stay
and bliss !
When ye fare well in very truth then I do no
mirth miss,
And when your ships of merchandise sail whole and 25
thoroughly sound,

In riches, goods, and welfare, then, do I your king
 abound.
 You are the cause of my strong life, and also of
 my cheer,
 Out of far lands your merchandise with muckle risk
 comes here ;
 But one thing puzzles me, and is for short the
 reason why
 Together here to come, ye burgesses, all caused 30
 have I ;
 To you with solid sense I have a question to
 declare—
 WHY BURGESSES' OWN LAWFUL BAIRNS THRIVE NOT
 TO THE THIRD HEIR,
 BUT CAST AWAY IN RECKLESS WASTE ALL THAT THEIR
 ELDERS WON ?
 Declare me now with weighty thought this question
 if you can.
 To you I give this question, burgesses, now all and 35
 some,
 For to declare in proper phrase against the morn I
 come."

*II.—The King's Question to the Nobles concerning the
 causes of the Degeneracy of their Order.*

Unto his noble Lords, then, *comen* has the enquiring
 king,
 To do most gladly all he saith, professeth old and
 young.
 "My lusty lords and nobles all, my lieges and my life,
 I am in sorrow, though your king, when you are 40
 all in strife.

When ye have peace within your lands, and when
ye have pleasance,
Then am I glad and eased in mind, and blythely
may I dance.
The head or body, well ye wit, can never stand
alane,
Without its members understood, to be of might and
main,
For to uphold in trusty pose the body and the 45
head,
And thus the limbs right fixedly cause it to stand
on stead.
Therefore, do I most blythely greet my lords and
barons bold,
To me ye are all hail, indeed, for me ye all
uphold ;
And now I hope ye'll shortly see, with speedy
diligence,
Wherefore I caused to swiftly come such noble 50
confluence,
And why, ye lords and nobles all of my sage
Parliament,
I caused ye all to gather here : Know then my full
intent—
One question have I vexing me, and it ye must
declare,
That in my mind is brooding, brooding ever mair
and mair ;
WHEREFORE AND WHY DOTTH PUZZLE ME, AND WHAT 55
THEN IS THE CASE,
SO WORTHY LORDS AND MIGHTY MEN WERE IN MY
ELDERS' DAYS ?
So full indeed of freedom, worship, honour in the
land,

Hardy in heart and strong of limb in every stour (*fray*)
to stand,
And now in you in later times I find the whole
contrair,
Therefore this doubt and question deep I bid you 60
now declare ;
And it declare in solemn truth, under the highest pain,
The morn, even at this selfsame time when that I
come again."

*III.—The King's Question to the Clergy concerning the
reason why they can no longer perform Miracles.*

Then to his Clergy came at length this noble, pious
king.
"Welcome, my bishops—prelates all," he said, "with
my blessing !
Welcome, my bedesmen ; pious souls. My bliss also, 65
my bield (*protection*).
To me ye are at every time ev'n helmet, spear and
shield ;
For just as Moses—meekest man—stood high upon
the mount,
Praying to God of heaven, our Father, e'en as was
his wont.
So, then, 'tis right in our own day, by orison devout,
Mine enemies and wicked foes should all be put to 70
rout.
Ye are, my holy men, the surest road and guide to
God ;
O'er all my realm of laymen folk ye are the rule
and rod.

All those whom ye condemn in wrath expect it shall
be done ;
And when from duty ye do shrink ye have an excuse
soon.
Thus in you always, at all times, examples are your 75
ways ;
And as ye say, in every trice, so all and sundry
says ;
Whate'er ye think in wisdom deep true reason is or
right,
To take exception to it then, nor I nor no man
might ;
And what ye think with equal wit is unreason or
wrong,
We all and sundry laity do sing the self same song. 80
One thing remains, then, with it all—I would were
understood—
The cause of which, within this place, to solve and
to conclude,
Wherefore and why is now my aim, I caused you
hither come—
My clergy and my faithful clerks, my prelates all
and some.
To you I have no other tale, nor any holy theme, 85
Excepting to ye bishops, what must be a plain
problem,
But what is aye to me a question deep and long-
held doubt.
So forthwith now, from out my mind I would ye
put it out ;
That is to say, my question is—WHEREFORE IT IS,
AND WHY,
IN OLDEN TIMES, THE DAYS OF YORE, AND DAYS OF 90
ANCESTRY,

SO MANY BISHOPS THERE WERE THEN, AND ALSO
MEN OF KIRK,
SO GREAT WILL HAD, AND ALSO POWER AYE, PIOUS
WORKS TO WORK?
And through their prayers, in earnestness made to the
God of might,
The dumb men spake who never spoke, the blind
men gat their sight;
The deaf man hearing then obtained, the crooked 95
gat their feet.
Were none in trouble e'er so deep, but well they
could them beir (*help*);
To sick folks all, and e'en to those with sickness
coming on,
To such they would be healers all, and likewise
med-i-cine.
And wherefore now in our own time; now wherefore
weary we?
As they did then in ancient times, so wherefore may 100
not ye?
And wherefore may not ye do now as these good
men did then?
Declare me now this question deep and problem if
you can."

The King anon cometh to the Burgesses for their Reply.

Upon the morning after service, and was served the
meat,
The king came in, in simple state, and sate down in
his seat;
Into the hall he stately strode among the burgess 105
men,

With him a clerk of muckle skill; with paper, ink,
 and pen,
 And bade them forthwith that they should, withouten
 any mair
 His question study, ponder well, and solve, and thus
 declare.
 And so the burgesses, who well the question deep
 now knew,
 Ordained a wise man duly then, as wise as he was 110
 true,
 The question to discourse forthwith, withouten any
 fail;
 And thus the sage hereon stood up, and thus began
 his tale:—

*I.—The Answer to the First Question concerning the
 Decay of Burgesses' Families.*

“Most excellent and very high, right mighty prince
 and king,—
 Your highness here now in our midst would fain know
 of this thing,
 Why bairns of burgesses thrive not unto the thirdmost 115
 heir;
 Can never thrive, have never thriven, but of all goods
 are bare;
 And evermore their fate it is; and that is for to say,
 All that their elders saved for them they forthwith
 cast away.
 This question to declare full well now unto you I
 can:—
 THE HEIRS BEGIN NOT AT THAT POINT AT WHICH 120
 THEIR SIREs BEGAN,

BUT WITH A MERRIE, SPEND-THRIFT HEART, BOTH BOLD
AND BADLY DEFT,
THEY AYE BEGIN JUST AT THAT POINT AT WHICH
THEIR FATHERS LEFT.
And this is answer short; but of this matter to speak
mair,
Why that the bairns of burgesses thrive not to the
third heir?
Because their fathers in their day right poorly did 125
begin.
With pack upon the back, and but a halfpenny and
lambskin,
And poorly trudged the weary wight from town to
town on foot,
And that right often wet-shod, too, full weary, wet
to boot,
Who at the last of many smalls, and profits few
could make
As made this bonnie pedlar oft a good and fat foot 130
pack.
At every fair for miles around this chapman aye was
found,
And soon his pack, when tightly prest, was valued
forty pound.
To bear this pack from fair to fair, when he felt
tired, in course
He bought in time, for many pence, a muckle
stalwart horse;
And at a later date, our man so worthily upsprang, 135
He bought a cart of muckle size to carry pot and pan.
With Flanders coffers for his goods, strong counters,
and a kist,
He waxed a great, rich burgess man ere ever any
wist;

And soon within his native town, to sell and also buy,
He had a shop upon the street to sell his naperie. 140
Then bought he wool of finest kind, and wisely could
it weigh;
And after that our worthy friend soon sailed upon
the sea.
Then came he home from many lands a very potent
man,
And spoused soon with muckle joy a mighty lady
then.
Across the sea so oft and oft our merchant rich now 145
passed,
That finally a seemly ship this rich man owned at last.
Thus by world's riches chasing, soon he grew a man
of strength,
And in a silver basin e'en his hands could wash at
length;
For though not making of his well-won gold a miser's
hoard,
In value worth three thousand pounds at last was his 150
cupboard.
Rich were his robes, apparel grand, and other gar-
ments gay;
For Sunday, silk our burgess wore; for week days,
green and gray.
His wife was comely, costly clad, in scarlet cloth of
red,
She doubtless had no scarcity at all of ale or bread.
And after that when twenty years had swiftly come 155
and gone,
A smart and stalwart man upgrew, this couple's
worthy son,
And after that, a good long space, this burgess rich
we read,

Died peaceably, as all of us must come to die
indeed,
And when he died and buried was, then came his
much-loved son,
And entered into all the wealth his father good had 160
won.
He stepped not any steps, be sure, along the busy
street
To win this wealth, so quickly spent; nor for it was
he wet;
When he would sleep, then sleep he did, he wanted
ne'er a wink
To win this store of muckle wealth, nor did he
sweat and think.
Therefore what lightly comes to one the same will 165
lightly go,
To win this store of muckle wealth he had no work
nor woe.
To win these goods, our burgess' son had not
spent one ill hour,
Why should he have the sweet alone and never
taste the sour?
Upon his fingers, white and thin, were rich rings all
in row,
His mother scarce would let the smoke upon her 170
dear son blow;
And would not own to anyone for very shame and
sin,
That ere his worthy father sold such goods as a
sheepskin.
The burgess' son would that man bless with *Bene-*
dicite,
Who said that degradation might o'ertake his high
degree;

With two men in his household and a valet at his 175
back,
And one in his own livery, and little else to lack;
At each one passing by, our friend would rage in
mighty wrath,
Who asked him in a mocking way "how much he
sold the cloth?"
In gambling and all games of chance he'd boldly
throw the dice,
And easy to the tavern could one always him entice. 180
Thus wist he aye of weal and gold, and never
heard of woe,
And now he gradually falls down to the lowest low;
Then to the court our hard-up friend doth soon
make his repair,
And joins himself at length unto a noble's youthful
heir.
He weeps not for his bygone wealth, or loss of his 185
world's all,
While dice and drink have done their work, and
pushed him to the wall.
He can't earn money at a trade as much as buy
an egg,
What wonder then this Burgess Bairn at length
begins to beg?
And sir, oh King, this is the cause and reason I
declare,
Why bairns of Burgesses thrive not unto the third- 190
most heir.

The King's Reply to the Burgesses.

"Well," quoth the King, "I've listened well, thou
well deserv'st reward,

For wisely hast thou this debate and problem true
declared,
Sir Clerk, take ink incontinent, with pen on paper
write,
And as the learned man outspake thou duly shalt
indite."

The King cometh to the Nobles for their Reply.

Then to his lords and barons all, hath come this 195
noble King,
Desiring well to know and find the true and sound
solving,
This question of, and problem too, and likewise all
his doubt,
Of which the lords and barons bold, and nobles
round about
Advisedly and soberly, as it should well accord,
Their answer and their words had laid upon an 200
aged lord,
Who now stood up with courtly grace, and courteously
did bow
Unto the King, his Majesty, and this tale told he
now :—

*II.—The Answer to the Second Question concerning
the degeneracy of the Nobles.*

"Excellent, high, right mighty prince, our monarch
ever sure,
Aye, at your call your nobles are, under your loving
cure,

And now, since you, our gracious Prince, have 205
caused us hither come

This doubt for to declare and solve, both all and
also some—

That is to say, the truthful cause, and wherefore,
now, and why

Such worthy lords upheld the King and lived in
days gone bye,

So full of freedom, noble birth, and in high honour
were,

Hardy of heart and strong of limb, to stand in every 210
stir;

And now in us, our fathers' sons, ye mean aye
mair and mair,

That in your time and to your grief, ye find the
whole contrair.

Sir, this is the cause we tell to you, the wherefore,
now, and why—

YOUR JUSTICES WHO SIT AND JUDGE ARE FULL OF
VANITY,

SO COVETOUS AND GREEDY ALL, AND FULL OF AVARICE, 215

THAT THESE YOUR LORDS AND NOBLES ALL REFUSE
TO PAY THEIR PRICE.

They then indict your lords in court and pillage all
your men;

The thief now from the loyal man 'tis marvel who
can ken!

They summon leal and false before them, all and
also some,

And them indict in court of law all under one pardon. 220

Thus be the hardy husbandman, never so true and
leal,

He summoned is before the court, as thieves are
too who steal.

They look to naught these justices, but if a man
have gear,
And it, I trow, must go to pay my lord, the justice'
share ;
The thief his remedy well knows, and will himself 225
outbuy,
While leal men all, and honest knaves, in the lock-
up will lie.
The leal man to compound in court will never give
consent,
Because he knows in veritie that he is innocent.
Thus all the husbandmen are summoned without any
doubt,
And pillaged each in turn of goods away all round 230
about.
Before, when husbandmen were summoned by the
king to war,
They had a jack, a bow and arrows, or perchance
a spear ;
And now, when formerly they had of yew a stalwart bow,
A club right glad our husbandman is when he
getteth now,
And for a jack of trusty steel, a ragged cloak has 235
ta'en,
A sword, worn-out and broken too, and rusty from
the rain,
How could such men, so ill-equipped, join with the
Royal Host ?
Rather to beg such rabble are, than over foes to
boast ;
And like their tenants are your lords, like them they
are but puir,
Of gold in kist or coffer now they have no weighty 240
care ;

Because they are all poor who tenure from them
hold,
It follows that your lords are poor, and lack the
needful gold.
For husbandmen, who wealthy are, and tenants of
great might,
Help aye their lords and landlords too, to hold their
ancient right.
And when your lords themselves are poor, thus then 245
you must conclude,
They hire their sons and heirs also for muckle gold
and gude;
Unto a fifthrate carle they go, and that at dearest
rate,
Who never knew in all his life of rank or gentle
state;
Thus courtesy and honour too, and pride of lineage,
Away they fade and swiftly sink, and soon all 250
disparage.
Their manhood, and their honour, too, soon right
away they hurl,
For marriage thus in time unites them to a lowborn
churl;
Who never knew gentility, nor ever held honour,
Nor freedom, worship, vassalage, nor knightly true
valour.
This then is the only cause, and that without a 255
doubt,
Why honour from your lords and nobles is of late
gone out,
And thus my lords and nobles all commanded me
to say—
How honour, freedom, worship ev'n, are from our
land away."

The King's Reply to the Nobles.

Thus spake the king : " Your tale is good, your finding
is most quaint,
Concerning those things vexing me, and mentioned 260
in your plaint ;
And in one sentence, brief it is, that thus you mean
to say :—
That loyal men are hurt in court, and thieves get
clean away.
And thus methinks you mean to say that justice is
not done,
Your tenants and your farmers robbed of what
they've sorely won ;
And thus it follows, you are poor whenever they are 265
poor,
Which 'gainst yourselves contains a charge, but like-
wise, too, a cure ;
That ye will follow war, and even marry too for
gold ;
And some their sons and heirs in marriage often
too have sold
To carles of low degree and race, but only that
they're rich ;
No courtesy nor noble blood ye know is found in 270
such.
Freedom, worship, honour, manhood, absent in them
too,
And this, dishonour is to us, but also so to you.
In this strain therefore briefly will I ere long now
conclude,
As ye, who are descended from our Royal noble
blood,

Must see indeed, I truly know, and clearly understand, 275
With God's grace helping me, this task I duly take
in hand—

To give in reason to my folk all justice and
remead,

That none in time to come can lose, or even excuse
can plead ;

A Doctor with our Justices shall henceforth always
pass,

Who loves his God, his soul, the Church, my honour, 280
and the Mass ;

This man a learned sage—a Doctor of the Law
shall be,

Who knoweth well the heart of man, the faith of
Veritie ;

Henceforth he shall my subjects hear, and likewise
shall he see

That leal men live in peace, and wicked truly
punished be ;

For well I know in kingdoms all, there can be no 285
worse thing

Than avarice in Justices—or favourites with a king.

After this tale from you, our courts you never need
attaint,

Nor yet against our Justices will you now make
complaint."

And henceforth did the king his law and justice
deal so well,

That no one in his courts at all could of injustice tell ; 290
And later on he bade his clerk, without one change
of word,

The whole tale in the statute book set forth in due
record.

The King cometh to the Clergy for their Reply,

And now unto his clergymen this noble monarch
came,
To hear his question's solving and their comments,
too, from them;
And they as men of wisdom all, in many kinds of 295
work,
Have laid their task and skilful speech upon a
cunning clerk,
Who in the schools had not in vain received a
high degree,
And in all scientific parts stood easy *a per se*:
He in short terms and wisdom keen began, with
sentence fair,
The question which had vexed the king in words 300
precise declare:—
“That is to say, the king now asks the reason for
and why
In ancient times and olden days, the days of
ancestry,
So many bishops pure men were, and good men in
the kirk,
Such great wills had for doing good and holy deeds
to work;
And through their prayers in humble mind, made to 305
the God of might,
The dumb men spoke who silent were, the blind
received their sight,
The deaf men hearing got again, the crooked got
their feet,
And none might be in woe so deep but succour
could them meet.

And seeing how when one is charged, himself he
may defend,
To our defence, we think you mean, why should we 310
not attend?
And thus it is you give to us your *quodlibet* and
doubt,
Your question and your diverse charge to thoroughly
thrash out."

*III.—The Answer to the Third Question, concerning
the reason why the Clergy could no longer
perform Miracles.*

"This is the cause right mighty king, we give it
you in short,
Unto your highness' mighty self we render our
report:—
The folks among the laymen wish this law would 315
never cease,
Which they observed in use and wont when bishops
do decease;
Within the kirk they meet forthwith—the young
and ev'n the old,
With meek and humble hearts and fasting many
prayers are told.
They seek from God in earnest words—words that
could ne'er be lost,
To send them inspiration down, even by the Holy 320
Ghost,
That they a bishop might select in room of bishop
dead,
Who them among might ably work and fill the
bishop's stead.

In all elections thus are found among us methods
three,
To choose a bishop for our kirk after the other dee—
That is to say, as told above, 'The Way by Holy 325
Ghost,'
Whereby we get the ablest man and priest of
virtue most ;
The second is 'Election' called (when we our bishops
lose),
A parson of perfection then, we use our wit to
choose.
In that cathedral kirk and in the former bishop's See,
Which is the proper place wherein a bishop chosen 330
be ;
And if in all the See be found no able man who
can
That office well support ; proceed in this way do
we then—
'*Scrutavi via*' it is called—the third of all these
ways,
Whereby to fill the bishop's place another priest we
raise ;
That is to say, throughout the land and over all 335
the realm,
At liberty we are to seek a man to hold the
helm.
These are the ways above—all three—without the
least excuse,
How, when a bishop dies, we may another bishop
choose.
But now, alas, contrary ways are what indeed we
find,
Which all our souls in heaviness and all our spirits 340
bind ;

For though these ways are wholly good, not one of
all the three,
In recent times is used to find what priests shall
chosen be ;
But that your might and majesty doth choose and
even make
Whoe'er you will—regarding not our loss nor what
we lack.
Then highly in he comes, as if on rainbow would 345
he sit,
And in by window from the north these foreign
bishops flit ;
They durst not enter by the door, nor yet pass
through the gate,
But over wheel and weather vane by guilefulness
will get.
To enter by the door of church who is not strong
and bold,
God's plough in furrow never can, and never ought 350
to hold ;
He is no shepherd leal to keep from harm the silly
sheep ;
Nor is he but in lambskin clad—a wily fox to
creep.
How could he work a miracle, and he a man so
ill ?
Not, save by magic potency, or by the help of
de'il !
For now-a-days a man may be right rich or very 355
poor,
But he shall never get a kirk if trusts to litera-
ture ;
For science, virtue, ancient blood, a kirk will never
hold,

For kirks are given only now to men of goods and
gold.
Thus king both great and excellent—the Haly, Haly
Ghaist,
Out of your good and holy men away is duly 360
chased;
And were not this the case, as doubtless I to you
declare,
Then *now* as formerly would they heal all the sick
and *sair*.
BUT WICKEDNESS SO THRIVES AND GROWS THIS
WICKED WORLD WITHIN,
THAT SIMONY IS FLOURISHING AND NEVER COUNTED
SIN;
AND THUS THE CAUSE IS EVIDENT, TO ALL AS WELL AS 365
SOME,
WHY BLIND MEN DO NOT SIGHT RECEIVE, NOR HEARING
GET THE DUMB;
And so the cause is likewise clear, in very sooth to
say,
Why holiness from churchmen all is wholly gone
away.”

The King's Reply to the Clergy.

“Then,” quoth the king, “I’ve listened well, now under-
stand I you,
And here to God I swear an oath and vow a holy 370
vow,
And this I promise to my Crown, and to my country
too,
That henceforth with the goods of Kirk I’ll have no
more ado;

Nor will confer my patronage on laymen small or
large,
But kirk-men aye to kirks will send since they
have all the charge."

Then had this noble king a reign of years long time 375
and space,
And in his time his country had both muckle luck
and grace.
His nobles honoured him most high, each after his
degree,
And husbandmen had peace to till, and had tran-
quillitie.
The kirk was free in all his reign while he was in
his life,
And burghers' selves and burghers' sons began 380
henceforth to thrive.
And after this for many years was never king more wise ;
And lived throughout a godly life, and in God's
service dies.

Then spake the jolly fellowship, in one voice, with-
out fail,
" God and Saint Martin now absolve you for your
learnéd tale."
And then spake Master Archibald—" The turn now 385
falls to me,
A story good or story ill, whate'er it chance to be.
Thus, as I can, to do the best I'll tell it without
hire,
If without other aim than keep me from this blazing
fire."

The End of Tale the First.



NEIDPATH CASTLE.

The Second Tale

Told by Master Archibald:

*Concerning a foolish King, who finally found Wisdom
through a Fool.*

LONG, long ago there lived a King, and this King 1
 had a Queen,
As many kings and queens before within the land
 had been;
This king in person handsome was, fresh, and of
 muckle force,
A dauntless man on foot be sure, and likewise too
 on horse;
Yet, notwithstanding, many faults upon his life befell, 5
The counsel of young men and youths, the king he
 loved too well;
Young men around him, and in court, he loved to
 be him neist,
Young men they were in stead to him of learned
 clerk and priest;
None who were wise could come him near, and none
 of hoary age,
So had he none of counsel grave, nor aught of 10
 wisdom sage,

To sport and play the livelong day, whiles up and
whilom down,
To lightness all he was inclined, and readily aye
boun'.
Now word has come that o'er the sea is hieing now
a clerk
Of science great, and splendid voice, of learned word
and work;
And with his other bus-iness, this wise man did 15
intend
His residence to make, and with the King his leisure
spend;
But well he saw that with the king might no man
long abide,
But they who would all heaviness and sadness lay
aside;
So bearing club and bell, and wearing parti-coat
with ears,
He feigned to be a licensed fool, forgetting all his 20
fears;
Italian could he speak right well, likewise the French
and Dutch,
The Latin tongue he knew but scarce, but feigned
to speak it much;
Unto the court straightway he came, and stood before
the King,
With club and parti-coloured coat, and many bells to ring.
"Dieu garde," Sir King, in privacy I'm not the one 25
to live,
For you and I related are as the riddle to the sieve;
Betwixt us two might also be as muckle love and
grace,
As frost and snow are plentiful from Yule far into
Pace (Easter).

Now, know you how the French folk talk, and how
they speak so fine?

"*Nul bon*," he says, in speech polite, and "*Monsieur*, 30
sir, *sans pyne*."

With that he loudly laughed before the King upon
the spot,

"Honour and ease, sir," queried he, "what man can
have for nought?

Come on thy way, Sir King, by good Saint James
I hereby swear,

That thou with me, or I with thee, *gang* homeward
will repair."

"Now by Saint Katharine," quoth the King, in 35
merry mood, and smiled,

"This Fool hath many wandering words, and
language very wild,

Come home with me, and here, I say, thou shalt
have cheer enough."

"*Grand mercie*," quoth the Fool again, and gave a
mighty laugh.

"Now," quoth the King, "from dullness all and
henceforth too from dule,

We may us keep for many days, while that we have 40
this Fool."

He now pretends a Fool to be in every deed and
word,

The wiser that a Fool is ev'n, he jests the more
absurd,

And thus at length it came to be this Fool was
called alway—

The Fool of fools, and every man soon of him had
his say.

Thus was this Fool a favourite of, and always with 45
the King,

While he had well considered all, and pondered
everything ;
Condition, use, and manner, and the guise in which
he showed
And copied well the King, and followed him in his
best mode.

*The King goes upon a Journey ; so does the
Fool.*

So fell it on a day, this noble King, and all his
Court,
Unto a city distant rode, intending to have sport. 50
This Fool, the way the King would ride, with caution
well perceived ;
“Another city,” said the Fool, “I’ll seek,” but them
deceived :
He took his club, and in his hand his tablets, ere
he went,
That going on this weary route, his time might well
be spent ;
Now, ere long by the way, a sorely-wounded man found 55
he ;
Now, with this Fool were footmen running, maybe
two or three ;
And some unto the Court belonged, and to the kitchen
some,
But no physician with them was, nor surgeon ev’n
had come ;
So sore a wounded man might neither go, nor a
foot stir ;
So, forthwith seeking out the cause, the Fool began 60
to spier (ask).

Then spake the man, and faintly said: "A riever and
a thief,
They have me sorely hurt, and brought me into
this mischief."
Now, all his wounds were gaping wide and filléd
full of flies
As big as bees, in any hive, they were of such a
size.
Then, one of them, who pity had, stepped up and 65
said: "Sir, pray,
May I, with your permission, scare those teasing
flies away?"
Then spake the Fool, and wisely said: "Just let
them be, now, man;
For they are full; and if they're scared, the hungry
will come then.
The full flies merely silent sit, as clearly you may see,
For they are now entirely full, as full as full can be. 70
Now, evil 'tis to scare away these flies, and do no
good,
For hungry flies will straightway come and suck the
poor man's blood.
The oftener that the flies are filled, and then away
are chased,
The new-arriving flies will only more of his blood
waste;
And they will draw his blood, and suck his life from 75
him sae sair;
Therefore, let them alone, and scare the flies from
him nae mair."
The sick man him beheld a-while, and him intently
deems,
And said he was not sic a fool as with his club
he seems.

Soon after that a little space, by that way came
the King
With many men, in gay concourse, who gladly sport 80
and sing;
A birchen branch within his hand he bore, in passing
by,
To keep his countenance well free from teasing midge
and fly,
For many of them filled the air, and stirred the
atmosphere
In all that region, through the heat, and through the
kind of year.
Now, looking side to side, the King, along the dusty 85
way,
Soon saw the wounded man, in pain and groaning,
where he lay;
And to him came he riding, asking why he lay
alone;
What ailed him, lying on the ground, and made
him sorely groan.
The man looked up, and slowly answered: "Sir, I
am so hurt,
For, both by thief and riever, I am bruised in every 90
part;
And yet, suppose though I am robbed, and thirst in
heat, and pine,
The fault is yours, Sir King, oh! hear, and nothing
is it mine;
For if with you good counsel sage, and wisdom
were aye chief,
Then would you well restrain the lawless riever and
the thief;
But what car'st thou while dwell with thee but those 95
who dance and sing,

Thou tak'st no thought of those who in thy realm
both weep and wring."
With that, the King the bob of birch straightway
began to wave,
The teasing flies from out his painful wounds to have;
And then began the wounded man to grumble and
to grane—
"Do not so, sir," he faintly cried, "or else I'm 100
slowly slain;"
"How say'st thou, then? 'tis passing strange, now tell
me," quoth the King,
"Why say'st thou this? I wonder much at such a
silly thing;"
And thus said all his men who, listening, round him
stood about:
"Thou would'st be whole, thy wounds would close,
were all the flies cleared out."
To all of which the sick man said: "By Him who 105
can us save:
Your Fool, Sir King, now list to me, has more wit
than you have;
And well I ken, by scanning deep his physiognomie,
He has more wit, spite cap and bells, than all your
companie.
My tongue is loth to speak, and now my body has
no strength,
So ask your Fool for all detail, and he will tell at 110
length.
I am but dead, in very truth, and I may speak nae mair.

Adieu! now, sir, for I have said, and well aye may
ye fare."
And now, from nigh the wounded man, the King
has come away.

His mind great perturbation had, and greatly moved
that day;
And in his heart great heaviness, and in his mind 115
much thought;
So wantonly and vain all things hereto he'd ever
wrought,
And how the realm in all his reign through him had
been misruled.
By young men's counsel he had wrought, and all the
country fooled;
And notwithstanding this, as he was drooping thus in
dole,
He marvelled aye and aye concerning him who was 120
his Fool:
What kind of man this wise Fool dwelling in his
house could be?
And what great thing the wounded man in such a
Fool might see?
And what the reason he could have, the cause
wherefore and why,
The Fool, though fool, was wiser than all his gay
companie?

The King therefore sends for his Fool.

And now, when later on the King had reached his 125
journey's end,
Right quickly for his Fool he asked, and bade them
for him send.
And when the King had sat him down at table for
his meat,
Unto his Fool he caused them set an honourable
seat.

A table round, and polished well, with clean cloth
laid had he,
Near where the King himself did sit, and might 130
both hear and see.
Then, in a little, quoth the King, with cunning look
and laugh:
“Sir Fool, you sit on high to-day, you’re lordly set
enough;
When you are fully satisfied, what call they you and
how?
Now, tell to me in honest truth, so homely seem ye
now.”

The Fool makes reply to the King.

“Sir, for my name, ‘Fool Fictus,’ known am I 135
mankind among,
Before you, as you see me thus, amid your courtly
throng,
And of this country, certes Sir, a native am I
born,
Of luck and grace, and worldly goods, and fortune,
too, forlorn.”
“Sir, Fool, now tell me,” said the King, “if that ye
saw this day,
A sorely wounded man lie groaning in the dusty 140
way?”
“Yes sir, forsooth, and such a man I did most truly
spy,
And in his gaping wounds, indeed, was many a
teasing fly.”
“Now,” quoth the King, “Sir Fictus Fool, now
straightway to me say,

Why scared you not the teasing flies from all his
wounds away?

Think you it was a proper deed—a deed of charitie, 145
In such a sorely wounded man to leave a single
flee?"

"Sir, trow me well in very truth, for truth indeed I
say,

Far better in the wounds the flies than were they
scared away;

For if so be the teasing flies from out the wounds
ye scare,

Then after them come hungrier flies, and that is 150
worse by far;

Therefore to let the full flies sit, was better far, no
doubt

For full flies occupy the wounds, and hold the
hungrier out.

The hungry fly that hovers round, that never has
been there,

Soon sucks the sick man's gaping wounds, and makes
them wondrous sair;

And when these flies are full indeed, then wisely 155
bide they still,

And stop all other hungry flies from flying all there-
till.

But sir, alas, a lesson take, methinks so, do not
ye,

Ye are so light in mind and full of every vanitie,
And have such love for noveltie, and all new things
pursue;

That every session you have change, and get a 160
servant new.

What will the one new servant say straightway unto
the other?

“Bestir your hand, and lose no time, mine awin
dear brother;
Use well your time, nor slothful be, if muckle gear
you’d raise,
For wit you well that courtly seats are slippery seats
always.
See, therefore, hurry quickly on, now be it wrong 165
or right,
Now gather fast into your lap while we have time
and might;
Let no man now unto the king, on any business speak,
Unless we get a bribe for it, or else the spell we
break.”
And when these avaricious slaves, their greedy hoard-
ing win,
They get their leave and laden go, and hungrier 170
ones come in;
So sharp are they at raking spoil, and narrowly can
gather,
They pluck the poor with grasping hand as they
were pulling heather;
And bribes they take from every man, both near
and ev’n afar,
And aye the last are than the first a vast deal
worse by far.
Justice, coroner, sariand, and even Justice-Clerk 175
Remove old officers from place, and new men aye
they mark;
Thus flay the poor, and ev’n would pull their skins
off overhead,
And from the poor right many a freight of magnitude
is led;
And stir them up and wait to see what time and
tide will bring,

And after them more hungry ones come in on rapid 180
wing.

In this way, then, the poor folk now are sorely kept
all under,

That were the world to drown for sin, would it be
any wonder?

Therefore examples such as these may cause us to
descry,

How servants new are very like unto a hungry fly."

The Answer of the King to the Fool.

"Now," quoth the King, "what say you all unto 185
our learned Fool,

Suppose, what would have happened, had he been
a clerk at school;

To God above then," quoth the King, "I hereby
make a vow—

You are not such a Fool indeed, I do most truly
trow."

Thus marvelled all the courtiers, who sat the King
about,

And at this Fool had wonderment, and muckle dread 190
and doubt;

Though he was Fool in habit, yet in spite of all
their fears,

A wiser talk they never heard before with all their ears.
Thus wondered all who gathered round, both he and
likewise he,

What manner of a wondrous thing this might turn
out to be.

In all this realm no man was like him—no; not 195
ev'n in Rome;

So full of wisdom was his word, no clerk might near
him come.
His time at first, as fits a fool, he did in frolic
spend,
But aye the wiser man he got the nearer to the
end.
And thus the foolish king and all his courtly
complement,
Concerning this wise fool, had wonder and astonish- 200
ment.

Regarding the Slaying of the Man.

A long time after this event a gentleman, perchance,
Had slain a helpless man, all through a reckless,
swift mischance ;
And to the royal court he came, and told this fatal
thing
Unto a man about the court, who'd entry to the
king,
And said—"Sir, lo ! I trust myself unto the King's 205
kind grace,
Who have a man slain by my fault, and I am wae,
alas !
And if you get my pardon full, and with the King's
assent,
Then rest assured I shall you pay unto your full
content."
The courtier the story tells unto the listening King,
And first to last the tale relates of this most 210
grievous thing ;
And then the King in clemency at such a sad
instance,

Bade bring the man the King before that happened
this mischance.

And while unto the King the slaying man his story
told,

Full sharply watched the King the while and did the
man behold,

A seemly man of make and form and handsome 215
seeméd he,

To slay that man so broadly built he thought a
great pitie,

And bade him pass where'er he liked from his
presence before,

And thenceforth be a better man, and, after, slay
no more.

Soon after that, in half-a-year, the King's royal pity
scorning,

Another man he cruelly slew withouten any warning. 220

Regarding the Second slain Man.

Then to the Court the homicide is forced to come
again,

Unto the Courtier who before his golden bribe had
ta'en

And said : " Sir, woe is me, I've slain another man,
alas !

And this misfortune sore has brought me to a
grievous pass ;

And would you help me as before you timeously 225
have done,

A sum of silver you shall have when pardon I have
won.

Another sum of money I shall give unto the King,

The heartily to pardon for this sad and doleful thing.
Now, help me, then, I beg of thee, by God's own
Son, indeed,
No other man but you have I from whom to get 230
rethead."

The Courtier having pondered, thus to him bade
make reply :—

"This deed to do on your behalf I'll try, uncertainly,
When recklessness caused you before to take the life of
one,

Forgiveness from the King I begged for what you
ill had done,

So might it not occur again, and yet once more 235
you've slain

Another man, yet notwithstanding, I will plead again.
Once more to help you in your need shall I make
bold essay,

And bide my time and tide and take occasion as
I may."

The Courtier at length hath wrought to come the
King before,

And looking well most skilfully unto his time and 240
hour,

He seized occasion when the King was blythe and
mighty glad,

But let occasion slip when he was heavy or right
sad ;

Then lowly kneeling at the throne, he fell upon his
knee—

"Lo! sir," he cried, "I have a boon of very great
pitie,

The man whom ye forgave as late as barely half-a- 245
year,

Another man now hath he slain, and lies in muckle
fear.

A certain sum of gold from him thus shall ye duly
get,

An' ye would pardon grant him and your crabbedness
forget.

He weeps right bitterly and sighs so grievously and
sore,

That he such mischief, you may trust, will never 250
fashion more.

In all your realm of mighty men there is no braver
man,

Great pity is it for the law to execute him then.

You may him have within your train, also his gold
and gear,

He will you stand in ready stead in time of war
and fear;

And now, suppose he slew two men, far better 'tis 255
that ye

Have two men slain, than thus to lose another,
making three;

Therefore, oh King, I beg of you, and pray you in
his case,

That you to him be merciful, and grant him kingly
grace."

The King then ordered the accused to stand in his
presence,

And there and then forgave him for his fault and 260
dire mischance,

And bade him go forthwith and do such mischief
never more,

Then took this man his leave, and homeward now
his footsteps bore.

Now sometime afterward this man, of whom so
much we read,
A third man slays in slaughter swift—another bloody
deed.

Regarding the Third slain Man.

Then to the Court again this man in haste made 265
his repair,
Such grace to get again as fell before unto his share;
So came he to the Courtier, his dismal tale to tell,
His lack of fortune and ill-luck, his case how it
befel.
This Courtier, to speak his mind, his hearer did not
spare,
For you, forsooth sir, dare I speak unto the King 270
nae mair.
So oft and oft you've promised well, then rushed
into mischief,
I dare not speak it to the King for very shame
and grief;
Now, by my soul and by my hope that things with
me go well,
No remedy for you exists, as far as I can tell;
Or, whether ye shall be allowed to live here now, 275
alas,
Or, whether yet a chance exist to grant you kingly
grace."
So once again this Courtier has come unto the King,
And audience sought of him, and told the grievous
doleful thing;
And how the self-same man, who two men formerly
had slain,

A third man still in recklessness has killed in wrath 280
again.

With that the much-vexed King, on hearing all this
dismal tale,

In great grief pondered deeply, and waxed wan and
very pale;

And straightway said "I've heard in grief; now
bring him forth to me,

Shall neither gold nor muckle wealth prevent him
that he dee;

If pity I him show then may God put me out of 285
mind,

No grace shall I show him for all the wealth of
golden Ind."

Then caused he bring to him the man without delay
ere lang,

And set him down for instant judgment there to
head or hang.

Before the King then came the man, so cumbered
with this case,

And on his knees he humbly fell, and begged the 290
King's good grace;

Then plainly told the King to him all grace he
must deny,

And likewise said to him the cause, and all the
reason why.

The Fool addresses the King.

While this was all proceeding, on a pretty little stool,
Sat Fictus listening calmly—he who was the Royal
Fool;

And said "Now if you do not cause this man to 295
head or hang,
In punishment for him he slew, then were it very
wrang.
The first slain man right well I grant 'twas truly he
who slew,
The other two in faith were slain beyond all doubt
by you!
Had'st thou him punished righteously, whene'er he
slew the first,
The other two had living been to-day, indeed, I 300
wist;
Therefore, alas, right Kingly Sir, this tale is ower
true,
For in good faith considering, the last two men ye
slew.
The wise and brave King David in his holy Psalm-
Book says—
'Blest is the man who keeps the law, and stands in
justice' ways;'
Therefore I hope that you, O King, wilt never dare 305
presume
To shirk all count and reckoning upon the day of
doom.
For each man's body in your realm a reckoning
you must yield,
To whom, indeed, a king must be a trusty spear
and shield;
O'er all the folk within the realm for whom you
wear the crown,
The lay class and the learned class—the rich, poor, 310
up and down.
The which, whenever and wherever slain, by aught
man's hand,

Account thereof ye have to tell, I now give you
warrant ;
Unless indeed such vi'lent death be caused by negli-
gence ;
This plea in mercy may be used, or else in one's
defence.
And on the day of doom, that awful day, then by 315
Saint Paul,
The Bishops then to God must answer forthwith for
the soul ;
If it be lost by fault of priest, or else by preaching
loose
Of the sound truth, then there avails no chance of
aught excuse.
The soul of man much value hath if worthy and
sincere,
Far dearer than the body bare when we at last 320
appear.
For Bishops many in each realm there are, as we
can see,
But *one King only* in each land is ordered so to
be ;
From this we see that to the soul pertains more
work and cure
Than to the body of a man that is of less valure."

The King's Address.

When all the above was duly said, the King says, 325
" Woe is me,
That I am fool of fools indeed, right fully well I
see ;
Perceive I likewise truly that I have but little school,

That I should be informed so wisely only by a fool.
I see full well by this true tale, which this wise Fool
can tell,
That I have greatly lack of truth, and also wise 330
counsel;
To send for all my lords at once, I hereby give
consent—
I summon them to meet at once and form a
Parliament;
And if the words be true which you have heard Sir
Fictus say,
I shall right well reward him for his truth without
delay,
And if his words be false indeed, and full of fantasy, 335
Then but a fool he is, and always fool him hold
shall I.

And through this Fool, the manslayer, all in due
time, came right,
And got in time from Parliament a full and true
respite;
And afterward when all the lords and nobles all
had come,
And in this Parliament had met together all and 340
some,
By all the Three Estates assembled it was duly found,
Considering the matter well and truly “crop and
ground,”
That Fictus, Royal Jester—he whom people called
the Fool,
Was wise in word and wisdom, an’ he was a clerk
in school.
The King also met the Estates, and signified that 345
they

Should sit down all, and having thought, seek out a
working way
How men who fitting were, with him within his
house should dwell,
Who full of wisdom were, and who might give him
wise counsel ;
And thus to make and stablish well by his Estates
all three,
Within his realm and kingdom vast, concordant unities. 350

And when these things had been arranged, and the
deed was duly done,
The King he swore a mighty oath by Sceptre and
by Crown,
That he should ne'er grant mercy more to any rank
of men,
Who slaughter in his realm committed either now or then ;
Unless against his will 'twas done, or else in 355
negligence,
Or else that it was after found to be in self-defence.
And such firm rule and governance he made in all
his land,
That luck and grace in it were planted, and were
aye growand ;
And then the Fool was not forgot, but thanked
before them all,
Who caused such concord to succeed and on them 360
all to fall ;
And off his coat they pulled full quick right over
by his crown,
And on him cast in long folds hanging now a
clerkly gown ;
And when upon his shoulders hung the gown that
all might see,

A cunning clerk, and mighty wise, indeed, then
seeméd he.
Soon after this it happened that a Bishop there was 365
dead,
Full soon then was Sir Fictus made the Bishop in
his stead;
And to the King and Queen he was full loving,
I relate,
And of their inly counsel always, too, most intimate.
And may God send examples such as this true pair
were seen,
To every King who lightly loves and loveth not his 370
Queen.
And, likewise, may God give us grace and space
on earth to spend,
And thus my tale is finished now and come unto
its end.

And then spake all the fellowship, so jolly and so
hale:
“God and Saint Martin quit you now, sir, for your
merrie tale.”
Sir William now outspake and said, “The lot now 375
falls to me
To tell a tale, in turn, though the feeblest of the
Three.
Indeed, I show a vexing lack of all good literature,
Yet then I'll make attempt with care and diligence
most sure;
To tell a tale as best I can, and such one as I
have,
And then methinks, from me, indeed, you will no 380
other crave.”

End of Tale the Second.

The Third Tale.

Told by Master William.

How a Rich Man is summoned before the Great King.

A CERTAIN King there is, and evermore a King will be ; 1

Therefore, the King of Kings, indeed, forever him call we.

Now, this great King a subject had, of muckle goods and gear,

A powerful man of riches great, I say, withouten fear.

This mighty man, of whom we read, possessed to him Friends Three, 5

And loved these friends right well, though not *all in the same degree.*

The First Friend, who shall nameless be, till he "in delf" was laid (in the grave)

He loved *far better* than himself—full oft I've heard it said.

The next friend, whom we'll call the Second, also loved he,

And loved him as he loved himself, ev'n in the *same degree.* 10

The last friend, whom we call the Third, he loved
thus, and so
In *no degree* at all like unto both the other two.
Supposing ev'n the wealthy man was friend to him
in name,
To him, as friend of deeper kin, yet never would he
claim.
The other two I've spoken of, the man's friends 15
were indeed,
As he himself right fondly thought, when he had
any need.

So fell it once upon a day, it chanced soon after
then,
The King he did enquire about and send for this
rich man ;
And sent to him his officer, withouten any fear,
Without delay straightforwardly before him to compear, 20
And to him count and reck'ning give right seriously
of all
He had of him all time now past, both great and
likewise small ;
And with that, this official, passed on with muckle
speed,
And summoned to the King this wealthy man of
whom we read ;
Of all the case regarding him he straightway gave 25
record,
That he in haste should come forthwith unto his
lawful lord.
The rich man, long before he heard the end of all
the tale,
Full sad in mind he grew, and waxed likewise both
wan and pale ;

And to himself he sadly said, right sick and fully
sair :

" Alas ! and woe is me, indeed, this is a hasty fare, 30
And, once I come unto the Court, my tail it will
be pulled,

For I'm afraid that my accounts will be all overhauled.
Now, what to do I cannot tell, full waesome, I, alas !
A cumbered and forsaken man am I in this sad case.
I have no help in all my rank, nor yet can I 35
supplie ;

But I will pass with ready heart unto my old friends
three.

Two of those friends I know so long, and aye I
loved sae weel ;

The fault will not be mine if I their friendship do
not feel.

The Third friend know I not so well, and lightly
held alway,

What can he in my state now do, but simply say 40
me nay ?

Now, without waiting, will I pass to them, and
prove them now,

And tell them all the cause and manner of this
danger now."

His Application to the First Friend.

Thus came this sore-endangered man unto his friend,
whom he

Loved better and more truly than himself in all
degree ;

And said, " Lo ! friend, thou knows't full well my heart 45
thou ever had,

And now, alas, I come to thee for I am sore bestead ;
For unto me, his officer the king did lately send,
For he desires that my account with him be duly
 kenned ;
And as you may right truly guess, loth am I now
 to go,
Unless with me a friend may go, or maybe one or 50
 two ;
And by our friendship, oh ! my friend, I humbly
 beg of you
To tell me, your old friend, directly what is best to
 do."

The Answer of the First Friend.

And being challenged in this way, the Friend replied
 that he
O'er all the world loved none so well, 'twas plain
 as A B C ;
"But may the de'il that lives in hell," he said "now 55
 make me swing,
If I appear but willingly before that crabbéd King !
The King, he is so very full of reason, justice, right,
I love him not in aught that will accuse me in his
 sight.
He loves not wealth or riches, swear I by the Holy
 Rood ;
Nor loves he vileness in the heart, nor evilly won 60
 good (s) ;
Now goods which wrongly have been won, to cause
 men give again,
There may be no worse use to put them to in any
 one ;

Against his searching enquiry can I make no defence,
So just he is in all his ways, and downright
conscience.

And all things in this weary world that I have long 65
called right,

Are not ev'n worth an egg in value in his honest
sight;

And those things that I make my liking, likewise too
my ease,

To him always are neither sport, nor do the king
ev'n please;

And these things, then, which bring to me much joy
and great galore,

All fantasies are judged, when to the King are 70
brought before.

And thus the King bears me no love, and is against
me ever,

And well I wit, on this account, that he has loved
me never.

For me he has no like nor love, nor aught desire
for me,

Nor can I boast the like for him until the day I dee.

So, added to what I have told, wherefore make any 75
mair :

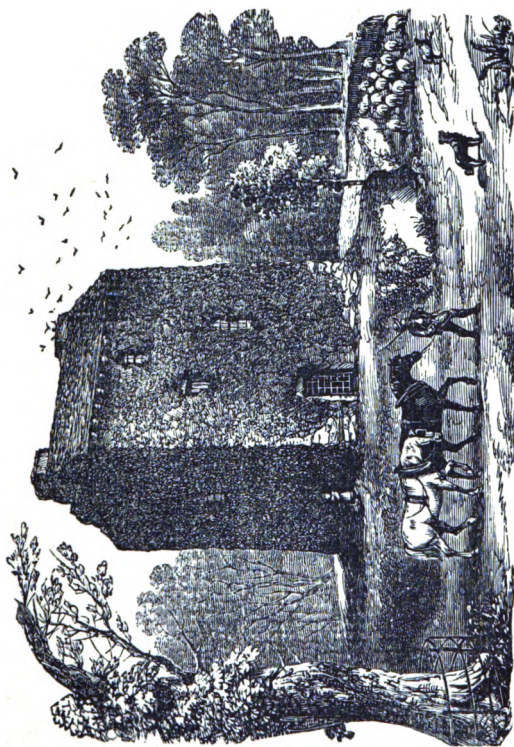
I come not to the King with you, and this I now
declare;

And now that you are 'neath a cloud, and under
this arrest,

For thee, in faith, I must maintain, I have but little
zest;

For me, I trow, that due to this, thou hast but little
mind—

Pass on thy way forthwith, and then—seek out another 80
friend."



BARNS TOWER.

And now our disappointed man sair mourning is in
mind,
And saith, right dolefully, "Alas, my friend is too
unkind ;
To whom when rich I gladly was support and ev'n
supplie,
And now, alas, that times are changed the contrary
I see."
Away he went then sadly-wise, declaring in words 85
wild—
"I grant by God, by this mischance, that I am all
beguiled."

His Application to the Second Friend.

Unto his other Friend, then straightway comen is
the man,
Whom formerly he loved as well's his own life he
did then,
And said, "Lo! Friend, I come to thee, the King has
sent for me,
And with the mandate comes his man, and bids me 90
that I be
At him in haste, without delay, and come soon at
his call ;
And to him make my reckoning of things both
great and small,
That I from out the Royal gift in all my days
have had ;
So you will see, as I well see, that I am straitly
stead.
Now you and I have long been friends—I hither 95
come to thee,

Whom, as myself, I aye have loved, ev'n in the
same degree;

For when in strife I find myself, or yet in evil part,
I know within my heart that thou art likewise sorely
hurt.

Therefore I pray that thou would'st undertake the
matter so,

With me unto your King that thou would'st forthwith 100
duly go."

The Answer of the Second Friend.

Then answered forth the second Friend, and said to
him again—

"I am displeased and suffer much to hear of all thy
pain,

But ready am I not to go—no, not in any thing—
With thee to be companion to compear before that
King;

Though he has sent his mandate, and likewise his 105
officer,

I may not go with thee at all; so, what wilt thou
have mair?

So from me rest assured, I'll ask thee never more
to lend,

And I am well assured toward thee my steps will
never wend;

Who now for me would caution stand, and would
my bailbond meet;

Why should we only take the sour, and likewise 110
leave the sweet?

The wealth that lies around me, that in faith, I
daily feel,

And what in future I shall have, in truth, I know
not weel;
Therefore this tale is always true as long as time
betide,
Wherever that one fareth well, the longer should he
bide.
Therefore, methinks, that tardy now shall forthwith I 115
be here,
Before your King, with such as you to foolishly appear;
And, finally, the thing to put for brief in terms
quite short—
With you, my Friend, I'll not go, save to show to
you the port (gate);
Trust well my words, from me no more shall even
ye get aught,
Once I go with you so far, and ye enter the King's 120
gate;
And shortly thus the matter ends, and now you may
conclude,
The more that you and I converse, from me ye get
no good."

With that this badly-fortuned man, who thus had
prayed his friend,
Departing said "Why tarry I? on none can I
depend!
Since I from my two oldest friends have made so 125
bad essay,
Ne'er can I get a friend at all, who will me
kindness pay;
Who dare not take in hand my quest—no not for
any thing,
And with a sorely-straitened man compear before the
King.

Whoe'er by hand of friend can safely poisoned
venom taste,
That surely is the hand indeed, in whom one's trust 130
is maist.
If man there be me to beguile, who has most craft
and gin (ingenuity,)
But he in whom my confidence and trust aye maist
is in?
What wonder now that I to faith no willing ear
can lend,
Since falsely thus in my distress now fails me my
dear friend.
Now well, indeed, I truly see and understand it so, 135
That better than a feignéd friend is open hostile foe;
And truth it is, as true it be, that ships sail over
waters,
That well I wit and truly find 'all is not gold that
glitters.'
Now over-late it is for me to prove my friend indeed,
When I such mastering fortune have, and sorely am 140
in need;
Better it were indeed that I betimes had overta'en
To prove my Friend right thoroughly, when Master
I had nane.
Alas! what shall I say, indeed, and now what can
I do,
I have no friend now left to me, no friendship to
come to!
But stay! one chance remains to me—the man called 145
my third Friend.
From him I truly fear I can get little me to mend,
To go to him, I know full well, is but my mind
to waste;
For to this man I always had but little talk or trust,

Because to him no love I bore, and often was unkind,
And as for being friends with him, he was not to 150
my mind,
And him both superciliously and lightly did I treat,
And now to him I sadly wend, and lowly go and
greet.
And yet how can I mourn to him, or make my
moan him to,
When formerly with him I had so very small ado?
Suppose to me a friend he was, a friend alone in 155
name,
Yet to be friends with him in truth, I never made
a claim.
Of him I can full truly say I had small joy or feast,
Of all my friends, in very truth, I lovéd him the
least.
What wonder is it, then, if I toward him do not
tend?
For all these years I held him naught save as a 160
quarter friend."

His Application to the Third Friend.

Now, comen is this vexéd man, of whom we duly
read,
Unto his Third Friend, writ above, when he had
muckle need,
And told him all his doleful tale and his distressful
case:
How to him came the officer, and on him laid his
mace,
And summoned him unto the King, and bade him 165
to compear

Before the King in Court, and give a reck'ning of
arrear;

And to him lay a statement full, and sharp account
of all

He had in all his previous life—the great and ev'n
the small.

And, hearing all the story, thus replied the Friend
again:—

“Of thee, in faith, my worthy Friend, I am right 170
fully fain;

In former times, 'tis true, of me you gave but little tale;
Nor at my hand would even shew love, or exchange
a deal;

And if in these past times you did for me ev'n
any thing,

It was not done with willing heart, but scorn and
pride to bring.

With other jolly friends you lived full well in use 175
and wont;

On me you had full little claim, and were of small
account;

For thee, thou thought'st thy humble friend was not
worth ev'n a pin;

And now, you see, I'm better off, with goods well
gathered in.

And yet, remembering all the little kindnesses that
thou

To me hast shewn in former times, I will requite 180
them now;

And with thee will I go at once unto the irate King,
And for thee speak out all my mind, and search
into each thing.

Where'er thou mak'st thy mind to go, there will
our footsteps tend;

And thou shalt ever holden be for my most tender
friend.
The King, he loves me well of yore, and this I 185
fully wit;
But yet, alas! I dread me much, thou comest
over-late.
Had'st thou my counsel wrought in business or in
anything,
Full welcome thou had'st been at every time unto
the King;
Betwixt us two were he to know that aught unkind-
ness lay,
Then would'st thou feel that he would love thee less 190
upon that day.
But did he know that 'twixt us two be any kind of
love,
Then he will be right fully paid, and highly thee
approve;
And did he know that thou 'gainst me did'st make
out any fault,
Then straightway things for thee will turn right sour
and fully salt.
And this in time shalt thou find out that just as 195
thou lov'st me,
So, in an equal manner, shall the King himself
love thee;
What more then of this matter can be argued us
between?
With thee before the King in due time shall I too
be seen.
Wherever may'st thou go indeed, withouten any blame,
As tender friend in very deed to thee I aye shall 200
claim;
Without offence to any one to be aye thy defence,

That truly aye while life shall last without aught of
pretence.

And now before whatever Judge thou comest up or
down,

Thee to defend and succour am I ready, and am
boun' ;

And whether in the future I return again or never, 205
From thee, in weal or woe, shall I ne'er more at
all disserve ;

Though cause the King to bind thine arms and cast
thee in a cart

To head or hang, even in extremes, from thee I ne'er
shall part ;

What would'st thou have me say now more that I
for thee fulfil,

In short, I'm ready, lead thou on, I come whene'er 210
thou will."

"Alas, alas !" then cried in sorrow our right wealthy
man,

"But few there be in all the world, tho' far I seek,
who can

Choose aye the best when in distress out of one's
friends all three,

While rapidly doth pass the time when they true
friends could be ;

Thou leav'st not sin alas ! I say, till sin has done 215
with thee,

And then but only when thou see'st that thou also
must dee ;

And then, alas, when thou would'st learn false friends,
'tis overlate,

When stands the cart of death, with pallid steed,
before thy gate.

Alas! I would that every man indeed would be as
kind
As have in all his worldly course the last Friend in 220
his mind,
And put no trust in his two Friends—come weal,
or bitter woe,
Who to the King when summoned hence, with him
will never go.

Who be these Three Friends?

Good folk who listen to my tale, I'd give the world
that ye
Should understand, from mine own mouth, who be
the man's Friends Three.
Whom mean I by the mighty King? Who is the 225
Officer?
And who the Rich Man is? Come list, and I will
now declare.

The King is God; in all the earth who is of might
the most—
The Father, and the Blessed Son, also the Holy
Ghost.
In Godhead one, the Trinity—One God in persons
Three;
Therefore, as mentioned formerly, the King of Kings 230
is He.
The Officer, undoubtedly, is He whom we call Death,
And none his mighty power can stand against, or
flee in faith.
No man exists who is so strong, nor wise, nor of
such wit,

Who 'gainst his summons dreadful e'er can obstinately
sit;
Suppose thou be of massive strength, as strong as any 235
wall,
Then must thou go with him at last, unto his Lord's
dread hall;
No wisdom yet was e'er so deep, no riches, nor yet
science,
Who 'gainst this officer might stand, or make the
least defence;
No castle, be it e'er so strong, no turret, and no
tower,
May cast o'er him the least of fear one moment of 240
an hour;
His stroke it is so sharp, likewise in vigour will not
stint,
No man exists on earth who may endure his mighty
dint;
He is so true in office, and unto his Lord so leal,
That there exists no process 'gainst his dealing to
appeal.
No castle, gold, or goods, or corn, nor yet great 245
herds of kye,
From this dread officer with bribe, remission ere can
buy.

The Rich Man whom I've mentioned means both
thou, and she, and he,
And all who in this wicked world have life, and so
must dee.
And then, as soon as death approacheth, and to us
hath come,
Then seek we from our Three Friends each, assistance 250
all and some.

What is meant by the First Friend ?

What mean I by the First Friend, but good pennies
and much pelf—
Which many men heap up in life, and love far
more than self ;
And when it falls to me and thee to join the
many dead,
Our riches then, in that dread hour, will stand us
sorry stead.
To part from all our hard-won wealth, suppose we groan 255
and greet,
It means farewell—not one whit less—again we'll
never meet.
Thus, tho' we hold right muckle gold, and store of-
wealth, indeed,
None may we pack and take with us, however great
the need.
The greater goods that we collect, the more gold
that we have,
The more accounting of it all, this mighty King will 260
crave ;
And thus when comes grim death, and on the dole-
ful day we die,
From us away, right fully fast, will all our riches fly ;
And thus I hold that man unwise, and understand it
so,
Who holds such for his dearest friend, who's all the
time his foe.
Three things there are within our life, who are our 265
foes right evil,
The flesh, which oft is mighty weak, the world, and
aye the devil.

And thus thy Friend of promise large, and love, as
you suppose,
Is counted one, and rightfully, of the most awesome
foes;
And now with thee he ne'er will go a foot—how
great thy need—
Before the King to give account, or with thee cause 270
to plead.
Thus, may'st thou see that this world's wealth and
all its luxury,
Before the dread Almighty King, is but great fantasy.

Who is meant by the Second Friend?

The second Friend, you ask of me? Let's see!
Whom will we call
But thy dear wife and loving bairns, and thy great
friends, and all
That answer thus, and say to thee, when times are 275
hard and short,
'We will not go with thee at all—or only to the
port;
We may attend a little way, say, near to the king's
gate,
But with thee further go we not, for that is not our
debt.'

Now, what mean I by this King's Gate, which we have
called the port?
Naught but the Grave, which one mayn't cross at all 280
but as a mort (corpse).
And then with us, when our day comes, unto that
gate will come,

Both loving wife and loving bairns, and friends both
all and some,
And there, indeed, for me and thee lang, lang will
they sair greet—
Or ever in the world again will you and I them meet.
In at this dreadful gate with thee, now, who, I ask, 285
will go
Of thy dear friends I've told you of, who said they
loved you so?
Riches or many goods, dear wife or loving bairns, or
friend,
Of the aforesaid dear ones none a willing ear will lend;
And when at length thou'rt lowly laid alone within
thy hole,
Thy head will be no higher then—no higher than thy 290
sole.
And then where is thy pillow soft, thy 'kerchief and
thy cap,
Thy gown of rich stuff and thy hood, with which
wert wont to hap?
Naught hast thou but a single sheet laid on thy body
bare,
And as thou did'st upon this earth, so find'st thou
waits thee there.

What is meant by the Third Friend?

The Third Friend then whom will we call, come listen 295
and let's see
Naught else but "Almsdeed" is our Friend and "holy
charitie,"
And this Friend answered our rich man in words right
sweet and low—

“Of me as Friend supposing that you made but little
shew.
Yet am I vexed for all the short acquaintance that
we had,
Since that I see thee in such trouble and so straitly 300
stead.
But wheresoe’er thou henceforth go on earth what-
ever airt,
With thee, my friend, shall I go too, and from thee
never part ;
And wheresoe’er thou go, suppose a thousand men
had swore
To slay thee, then would I, thy Almsdeed, stand aye
thee before ;
And as thou see’st that water always slackens raging 305
fire—
So then do I thy Almsdeed calm thy dreadful Judge’s
ire.
And thus I tell you, good folks all, we by example
see,
That there are some to help in trouble of thy friends
all three,
Who can to any man do good of all the host but
one,
Almsdeed by name, what pity ’tis it be so rarely 310
done ;
We think so lightly of it in this world of crime and
sin.
Through fleshly lust and fault, with which our time
is filléd in,
While all the precious time in fantasy is passed and
lost,
Which we can never mind, but only can regret the
cost.

Repentance all our faults to mend, we have no time 315
nor grace,
Into this earth while we fulfil our time and hold
our space.
Then one day comes grim Death and says, "Have
done, pay up thy debt ;
Come on with me without delay, the cart is at thy
gate."
Then will we say with woeful groans, "What awe-
some ways are his ;
Alas ! alas ! had I in time but knowledge had of 320
this,
I would have done strict penance oft, oft would I
fast and pray,
And dealt my goods, with ready hand, in alms deeds
free away.
Therefore, my counsel is to all, that we our ways
should mend,
And put no trust that things will go right, at the
latter end.
And, finally, all strive to keep free from the fell sins 325
seven,
That we may win the holy bliss and happiness of
Heaven.
And, finally, from out this world that we our way
may win,
Escaping shame and worldly debt, and every deadly
sin ! "
And then spake out the Priestly Two, with great truth
and delight :
"This good tale, sir, I pray to God that He will 330
you requite ! "

End of Tale the Third.



SAINT NICHOLAS.

The Date and Authorship of the Poem.

Probable Date of the Poem.

CHAMBERS says—"It is to the reign of James III. that may most properly be assigned the authorship of that literary curiosity 'The Tales of the Three Priests of Peebles.' By some, the date of the Tales has been imputed to the reign of James V., but, as noticed by Pinkerton, the work more probably belongs to a period anterior to 1492, for it bears an allusion to one of the kingdoms of Spain being still heathen. and such was the case until the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella in the above year. Of its author nothing is known. The Tales are of a jocose and moral character, touching on the vices of the age, and more particularly those failings of the clergy which fifty years later provoked the acute satire of Sir David Lindsay. We can only regret that the genial literary qualities of the poem are lost to popular acceptance on account of its antiquated orthography." — *History of Peeblesshire* — Chambers, 1864.

In Dr David Laing's edition of "Early Scottish Metrical Tales" occurs the following—"The only printed edition of 'The Tales of the Priests of Peebles,' of which any trace appears is that imprinted at Edinburgh by Robert Charteris in the year 1603. From this edition, which is of very great rarity, these Tales were published by Mr Pinkerton in 1792, and a considerable portion of them by the late Mr Sibbald in 1801. With regard to the author, not the slightest hint is to be discovered, and, therefore, it were idle to have recourse to such suppositions as those in which Mr Sibbald indulged; who, at length, seemed to have settled the matter to his own conviction by fixing their date between 1533 and 1540, and attributing them to John Rolland, the author of a metrical version of the Seven Sages, which passed through several editions, and of a long dull moral poem under the title of "The Court of Venus," printed at Edinburgh in 1575, of which one copy alone is known to be preserved. In answer to all Mr Sibbald's conjectures, it is enough to state that a portion of these tales with the title "Here begins the Book of Three Priests of Peebles, how they told their Tales," is contained in a manuscript which appears to have been transcribed at least twenty years previous to the date he assigns for their composition, and probably before Rolland was born." Mr Pinkerton says—"It is hardly necessary to remark that these Tales of the Priests are more moral than facetious, and that their chief merit consists in a *naïf* delineation of ancient manners. And Irving, in his "Lives of the Scottish Poets," says—"The Tales are of a moral tendency, but at the same time are free from the dullness which so

frequently infests the perceptive compositions of our earlier poets." The latest information we possess regarding the poem comes from the pen of Professor Veitch in his recent volumes "History and Poetry of the Scottish Border." The Professor says—" 'The Three Tales of the Three Priests of Peebles' seems to be referred to in 'The Complaint of Scotland.' The production may thus be taken as earlier than 1548, or even 1547. "The Priest of Peebles spiers (asks) a question in a book that he compiled why that Burgesses' heirs thrive not to the third heir; but he might have spiered as well why that the successors of the universal common people both to burgh and land thrive not to the third heir."—(*The Complaint of Scotland*, c. xvi., 143—Murray.) It is possible that the reference here is to the author who was probably well enough known at the time of the composition of the "Complaint," who might in truth, from the terms employed, have been living at the period. The tales are very good specimens of what was for many centuries the staple of Scottish poetry—viz., the picture of habits and manners in private life, in the church, in the courts of justice, and at the royal court. They are highly moral and didactic in tone, patriotic, and boldly critical, suggesting remedies for crying evils."

The various references to, and editions of, the Poem may be thus arranged chronologically:—

- 1.—1520. Manuscript containing a portion of the Tales, beginning:—"Here begins the book of Three Priests of Peebles, how they told their Tales," &c.
- 2.—1549. Complaint of Scotland, containing an allusion—"The Priest of Peebles spiers a Question."

- 3.—1603. Bound up with "Ane godly dream," edited by Robert Charteris, Edinburgh.
- 4.—1792. Scottish Poems: John Pinkerton; from which is taken the present version.
- 5.—1801. Chronicles of Scottish Poetry. Sibbald.
- 6.—Irving's "Lives of Scottish Poets."
- 7.—1826. Early Metrical Tales. David Laing, Edinburgh.
- 8.—1864. History of Peeblesshire. Chambers. Extracts from the Poem.
- 9.—1888. Early Metrical Tales, 2nd Edition. Laing.
- 10.—1893. History and Poetry of Scottish Border. Prof. Veitch. Extracts.
- 11.—1894. Modernised Version as here represented.

Probable Author of the Poem.

WILLIAM DUNBAR, 1460-1520,

Predecessor in poetry of Ferguson and Robert Burns, is mentioned by the present editor, not as the author of the "Tales"—for the style of the poem is not Dunbar's—but as having been probably acquainted with the author.

In his poem, "The Lament for the Makkaris" (poets), 1507, the enumeration of native Scottish poets shews how rich in song the literature of Scot-

land was at this period. A few verses from the poem are added :—

- “ The good Sir Hugh of Eglintown,
Ettrick, Heriot, Wyntoun ;
He (Death) has ta'en out of this countrie :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ That scorpion fell has done *infect* (infection),
Maister John Clerk and James Affleck,
Frac ballad-making and tragedie :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ Holland and Barbour he has bereft ;
Alas ! that he naught with us left,
Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lee :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ Clerk of Tranent e'en he has ta'en,
Who made th' ‘ Adventures of Gavain ;’
Sir Gilbert Hay ended has he :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ He has blind Harry and Sandy Traill
Slain with his shot of mortal hail ;
While Patrick Johnstone might not flee :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ He has left Mercer, his indite,
That did in love so lively write ;
So short, so quick, of sentence hie :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ He has ta'en Roull of Aberdeen,
And gentle Roull of Corstorphine ;
Two better fellows did no man see :
The fear of death perturbeth me.
- “ In Dunfermline he has ta'en Brown
With Maister Robert Henrison,
Sir John the Ross embraced has he :
The fear of death perturbeth me.

“ And he has now ta'en last of a'
 Good gentle Stobo and Quintin Shaw,
 Of whom all wights have pity :
 The fear of death perturbeth me.

“ Good Maister Walter Kennedy
 In point of dead lies verilie ;
 Great ruth it were that so should be :
 The fear of death perturbeth me.

“ So he has all my brethren ta'en,
 He will not let me live alane ;
 Of course I must his next prey be :
 The fear of death perturbeth me.”

It is possible that the “ good gentle Stobo ” may have derived his name, or his designation, at least, from the parish of Stobo, adjacent to Peebles, and that he may have been the author of the Tales.

GAVIN DOUGLAS—1475-1522.

This Ecclesiastic and Poet may have a claim, in the present Editor's opinion, to the authorship. The theory may be constructed out of the following facts :—

The Three Tales refer, presumably, to the weak Government and favouritism of James III.

Gavin Douglas was the son of the Earl of Angus, who took a leading part in hanging the King's favourites on Lauder Bridge, in 1482.

Saint Bride is the patron Saint of the House of Douglas.

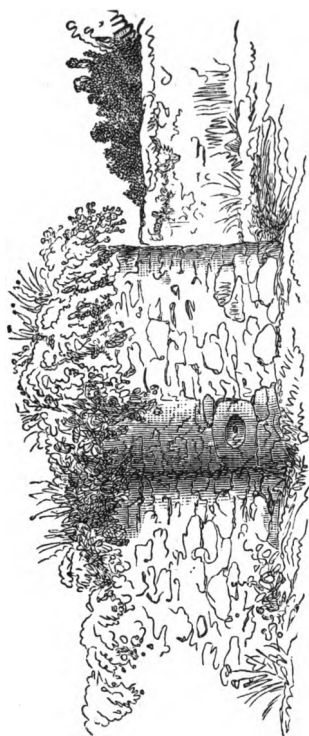
In the poem, the tales are told upon Saint Bride's Day.

The Kirk of Traquair is dedicated to Saint Bride, whose parish begins two miles east of Peebles. James III. conferred upon Dr. William Rogers (one of his favourites) the lands of Traquair, in 1469, which he retained for nine years, and then sold for £3 15s 10d sterling, to the Earl of Buchan, in 1478. This Earl of Buchan helped to hang Dr. Rogers from Lauder Bridge, four years later.

All the above facts would be known to Gavin Douglas, who lived among the actors in them, and whose youthful mind would be impressed by the complaints of the nobles against the King, as well as by their summary vengeance.

Hence, in his maturer years he could construct the poem out of his recollections and impressions.

The ecclesiastical facts mentioned in the tales indicate that the author had a good idea of affairs ecclesiastical; for example, the mode of electing Bishops; and this circumstance, taken with the features relative to the House of Douglas, lead to the not improbable conjecture connecting Gavin Douglas with the authorship.



REMNANT OF PEEBLES TOWN WALL.

Notes Explanatory of the Text.

PAGE 17 ; LINE 1—"IN PEBBLES TOWN."

Extracts from the Burgh Records, 1460—et seq.

The following extracts taken from the Burgh Charters and Records between 1460 and 1488, the surmised period of the poem, illustrate contemporaneously the burghal and ecclesiastical life of the time:—

Inhabitants of Peebles freed from appearing in Courts of King's Forest of Ettrick.—Edinburgh, October 28, 1473. James, by the grace of God, King of Scots; to all and sundry, our lieges and subjects, to whose knowledge these our letters shall come, greeting:—Know ye that, forasmuch as *our Burgh of Peebles is an old free Burgh* of our realm, claimed and founded by our progenitors of most noble mind, with liberties, privileges, and free burghage like as others our Burghs are privileged in time bygone; and, therefore, where the burgesses and inhabitants of our said Burgh have of late been arrested and called by our officers of our Forest of Ettrick to compear and answer at the Courts of

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our said Forest, in treating of their old freedoms and privileges aforesaid, we have discharged, and by the present letter discharges, for us, and for our successors, the burgesses and inhabitants of our said Burgh of Peebles and their successors that shall inhabit the same Burgh, of all coming and answerings perpetually in time to come in the said Courts; and if any of the said inhabitants trespasses in destruction or taking of green wood or deer out of our said Forest, we will that the defaulters and trespassers thereof be punished and corrected, and pay their fines by the knowledge of an Assize in our Justice Court of Peebles, as is proper, and in no other Courts outside the freedom of our said Burgh.—*James Rex. (III).*

Patronage of St. John's Altar assigned to Bailies of Peebles.—"To all and sundry to whose knowledge these present letters shall come: James Tweedie of Drumelzier, William Cockburn of Henryland, William Veitch of Dawick, Thomas Lowes of Manor, George Elphinston of Henristoun, and Thomas Dickson of Ormiston—greeting in God everlasting. Know ye that we have over resigned, over given, granted and renounced, and by these present letters, for us, our heirs and assignees, freely give, over resign and renounce to the Bailies, burgesses, and whole community of the Burgh of Peebles and to their successors, heritably and for evermore, all and whole the Patronage that we have of the Service and Altar of Saint John the Baptist, founded within the Parish Kirk of Saint Andrew, within the said Burgh; to be holden and to be had all and whole the said Patronage with the gift and presentation

thereof to the said Bailies, burgesses, and community of the said Burgh and their successors, from us and each one of us, our heirs and assignees for evermore. . . . In witness of which thing, to these present letters all our seals are to be hung, at Peebles, the 15th day of December, 1473."

Chaplainry at the Altar of St John the Baptist founded by the Bailies of Peebles.—"To all who shall see or hear this charter, John Dickson, William Dickson, bailies, and the burgesses and whole community of the burgh of Peebles, eternal salvation in the Lord. Know ye, we, with unanimous consent and assent, to the praise and honour of Almighty God, the most blessed Virgin Mary His Mother, Saint Andrew and Saint John the Baptist, and all the Saints of God, for the health of the souls of the most serene Prince, and our most worshipful lord, the Lord James III., most illustrious King of Scots, and Margaret, Queen of Scotland, and their children; and of the souls of James Tweedie of Drumelzier, William Cockburn of Henriland, Paul Veitch of Dawick, Patrick Lowes of Manor, George Elphinstone of Henryston, and Thomas Dickson of Ormiston, and of their ancestors and successors; and also of the souls of all who have paid the debt of all flesh in wars or combats between the foresaid parties; and also of the souls of burgesses and community of the said burgh of Peebles, and the souls of all faithful dead, to have given, granted, and by this our present charter, confirmed to God, and Saint Mary, ever Virgin, and Saint John the Baptist, and all the saints of God, and to a Chaplain celebrating, and

forever yearly to celebrate, Divine service at the altar of Saint John the Baptist, situated in the Parish Church of Saint Andrew of Peebles, in pure and perpetual alms, an annual rent of twelve merks usual money of Scotland, to be issued and taken yearly at two usual terms in the year—Whitsunday and Martinmas in winter—by equal portions out of all and singular our lands, mills, and rents of the community of the said burgh of Peebles. . . . Moreover the said chaplain for the time being shall be bound, when required, to celebrate mass daily; and if he shall absent himself from the said service for the space of one month, the said chaplainry shall become vacant unless he have license, or it be notorious there are reasonable causes. As also the said chaplain shall be bound to be chanter, and to be in his surplice on all festival days in the choir, and to be present at Matins, masses, and vespers, as other chaplains do in the said church; and the foresaid chaplain shall also be bound, at the commencement of every mass, to exhort the people to say, for the said souls, the Lord's Prayer, with the Angelic Salutation.—At Peebles, 15th day of December, 1473."

Claim of Four Shillings Annual for the Rood Altar.—

April 21, 1460.—The Head Court of the Burgh of Peebles held the 21st day of the month of April, the year of God 1460, by the Bailies William of Peebles and Thomas Dickson, the suits called, the courts affirmed. On which day appeared in court Sir Adam Foster, servant to the Rood Altar, and claimed four shillings of annual to the Rood Service, of a land of William

Watson's; and in order to declare that, he brought Sir John Williamson, notary, who, being sworn, depones by his great oath that he himself took somewhile to the Rood Service the four shillings of the said lands, and by his knowledge pertains still to the Rood Service.

Burgesses Made.—That same day, James Wauch and Thomas Johnson were made burgess. Cautioner for James Wauch's neighbourhood and burgh rent, John Wauch; and John Dickson cautioner for the said Thom Johnson for his neighbourhood and burgh rent—the foresaid James for twenty shillings; and for the foresaid Thomas a rood of causeway or the price of a rood making, and that is ten shillings.

Ale Tasters.—November 3, 1460.—These are the ale tasters:—Tom Johnson, John Hyltson, Andrew Glae, Tom Geddes.

Flesh Pricers.—These are the flesh pricers:—James Wauch, William Wright, Henry Buchan, Will Reid.

Land Surveyors.—June 19, 1461.—These are the land surveyors to serve the Burgh of Peebles:—
+ William Bullo, Richard Cant, + John Haro, Thomas Jameson, George Dawson, + Law Cade, + John Crock, + Tom of Gordon, Patrick of Temple, Dick Smith, James Gibson, John Murchison, + John of Woodhaw, Thom Jonson, Tom Young, Tom Gibson.

Tolbooth.—November 1460.—It is ordained that Dick Bullo shall have forty shillings for the labour that he makes of the Tolbooth, so that he be busy, and cause the work be ended.

Disobedient Priest.—February 16, 1460.—The which day the Court found Sir John Hyltson disobeyer of bailies and of neighbours.

Mills.—July 28, 1461.—We, Bailies of Peebles, being at this time in office, Thomas Dickson and Michael of Forrest, and the community of the said Burgh, with consent and assent of the said commonties, John Dickson, of Smithfield, and Ringan Dickson, his son, and apparent heir to the said John, us to have set and to farm letting, and by this our present writ in our common book, sets and farm lets to our loved burgess and neighbour, Andrew Mylner, our mills and millings, that is to say our common mill standing upon the water of Peebles, and on the North half of our said Burgh; and our mill and millings standing under the Castlehill, under the South side of the said hill, for all the terms, days, and years of his life and livir on earth, after the date of this present writ in manner and form as after follows:—That is to say the foresaid Andrew shall pay yearly of three years following after the date of his entry into the said mills and millings, twenty and six marks of usual money of Scotland at two usual terms of the year—that is to say, at Martinmas (in winter) thirteen marks, and at Whitsunday (in summer) other thirteen marks; and as well at other times in the year as at the terms if the town needs or wants, when he is charged by the Bailies and communities of the said Burgh, at his goodly power. And from the three years, be fully by-passed and out-run, the foresaid, Andrew in the same manner in years and at terms before spoken, shall pay twenty pounds of usual money of Scotland to the said Burgh by

even portions for the foresaid mills and millings, and of the foresaid sum of twenty and six marks, and at the forenamed terms in years; and also forth following by years and terms of the twenty pounds in perpetual to be taken, given, and paid of the said mills and millings in years, and at terms before written by the foresaid Burgh to the Rood Service at the Rood Altar in Saint Andrew's Kirk for the lives and souls of the communities of the said Burgh of Peebles, John Dickson's soul, his heirs, the said Andrew's soul, and all Christian souls, two marks usual money of Scotland to the upholding the foresaid Rood Service, while the foresaid mills and millings stand. . . The said Andrew, at the will of God, shall build the mill and milling under the Castlehill, with the help of the communities of the said Burgh—that is, they shall lay the great timber of oak in place with the material which is standing in place with mill-stones, and other building stones; and each neighbour to help him half-a-day to the cleaning of the mill-dam.

Bailies—Flesh-Pricers—Ale-Tasters.—1461, October 5. The head Court of the Burgh of Peebles held upon Monday. The same day were chosen Bailies—John Madour and John Dickson; the same day were chosen Flesh-Pricers—John Porteous, &c.; the same day were chosen Ale-Tasters—William Murchison, &c.

Altar-Lands.—That same day compeared in Court Sir Adam Foster, Keeper to the Rood Service in that time, and brought with him three reckonings in full Court, and asked award of that foresaid Rood land; and then the Court, ripely advised, awarded

that that foresaid land was in the Rood's hand, for fault of the annuals, as is before approved; and then the suits called Pat Kello, after long length of time abiding after a proclamation made at the door, gave that for doom.

Burgess.—Nov. 16. 1461.—That same day was made burgess James of Morton, and his burgess silver given to Meg Henryson as his dowry to her for the love of God.

Saint Michael's Land.—May 10, 1462.—And also that same day, incontinent, when the court was done, John Dickson, bailie, with certain of the neighbours with him, passed to the foresaid land, and there was brought the image of Saint Michael; and of that land there was laid *earth and stone in that image's hand*, and that earth and stone was delivered to John Dickson, bailie: and then the said bailie, incontinent, caused Richard Wilson, sergeant, with the said earth and stone, give the foresaid Thomas the Hay possession and heritable state of the foresaid lands, with the pertinents to him and to his heirs, saving each man's right; for the which land they paying yearly fifteen shillings and fourpence of annual rent to the upholding Saint Michael's service at his altar in Saint Andrew's Kirk.

Saint Michael's Service.—June 14, 1462.—That same day Sir John of Loche compeared in court, and humbly besought the bailies and the neighbours in the court that they would, with their favour, consent and give him leave to make exchange of Saint Michael's service as they are curators thereto, with Master Thomas of Cockburn, and

the said Master Thomas upholding and doing the said service of Saint Michael in Saint Andrew's kirk in such like manner and form as the said Sir John makes and does. And then the Court fenced about: each man by his own voice gave his election to the said Sir John, and gave him leave thereto; and then in continent, the said Sir John resigned up *with a glove*, in the bailie's hands and the neighbours, the said service of Saint Michael's, and all the right he had thereof.

Broils.—October 11, 1462.—If there be any that fights or broils either by night or by day in disturbing the town, and for great peril of ill-doing, whatever party they be found in the wrong, they shall pay to the causeway making to the High Kirk, without favour, ten shillings.

Underselling Bread.—October 25, 1462. That same day the good men of the Inquest instituted and ordained whoso'er she was who broke the price of bread or ale, there shall be taken off her twelve pence to the buying of a clock.

Dykes.—Each man have his dykes by Martinmas made sufficient both for fence and head-room and side-wall dyke, under the pain of two shillings taken for the clock.

Stubble.—Whoever they be that take stubble off the land, the house that it comes to, there shall be taken from it sixpence to the clock.

Unfreemen.—Whoever he be who buys, either within the burgh or without, skins, wool, hides, or white cloth from unfreemen with packs, shall pay sixpence to the clock.

Friar Thomas Lorimer.—November 8, 1462.—That same day the Court solemnly advised and fenced about, each man by his own voice, saving eight persons, decreed and gave their election that Friar Thomas Lorimer should serve in the Cross Church till Beltane of his good behaviour; and to have his living at the will of the Bailies, and the commons giving of the goods of the said place.

Burgess.—March 15, 1462.—Was made burgess, John Scott, and has paid for his freedom a bow and sheaf (of arrows) to the town.

Bridge-Masters.—February 2, 1465.—That same day were chosen bridge-masters, Thomas of Cockburn, &c.

Pestilence.—October 3, 1468.—It is ordained the same day, for the keeping of the town from the pestilence, that the four gates of the town be closed, and kept daily by a man who shall stand for the keeping of each gate under the pain of eight shillings, to be taken off him who should keep the gate that day of that quarter whenever it falls, and the eight shillings to be given to the Bridge.

Gamblers.—January 16, 1468.—The Inquest and the neighbours ordained that the neighbour who resets players at the dice, either hazard or raffle in his house, either night or day, there shall be taken off that man who owns the house, five shillings, without favour, to the Bridge-work.

Kirk Masters.—October 20, 1471.—The bailies and the neighbours have chosen two kirk masters.

Inventory.—March 13, 1478.—Janet, the wife of the Will Mowat, has sold and delivered to James

Robinson, for fault and dire necessity of her living, a meat almry (cupboard), a vessel almry, a couch bed, board and trestles, a pot, a brewing caldron, the furniture of the hall, a knap-sack, and a crook.

Burgess Fees to be Used for Certain Purposes.—April 20, 1472.—Which day was made Burgess John Nicol, and his freedom (fee) given to John Murchison, Abbot of Unrest in that time.

May 19, 1480. Which day was made Burgess William Hardy for ten shillings which was given toward the erection of bow butts.

May 8, 1488. John Cant and Simon Foster (made burgesses), each one of them giving four score loads of stones to the building of the Newark at the east end of Peebles.

Item, William of Tweedie for a chalder of lime to the steeple building.

Assignments for Charitable Purposes.—Various assignments of lands and tenements for religious or charitable purposes occur in the records of this period, of which these instances follow :—

On January 29, 1473, the Archdean of Glasgow delivers, by means of an *inlock key*, the use for life of a loft in High Street to Sir William of Fyllop, at his decease the profits of the loft are to go to Saint Leonard's Hospital; on the other hand Sir William assigns by handing *earth and stone* to Bailie Dickson, who in turn passes it on to the Archdean, certain land for the immediate use of the hospital and almshouse.

On February 12, 1473, a burgess, William of Peebles, assigns *with earth and stane*, his foreland, situated in the cunye or corner between High Street and

Northgait to St Leonard's Hospital "for his soul, his wife's soul, his bairns', and principally for all the souls that the said William has had any goods wrongously of any man, by buying or selling or any interchanging, and for all Christian souls."

On July 18, 1474, a man and his wife resign *with a penny* 12 pence of annual out of a certain land in Briggait to the Church of the Holy Cross.

PAGE 17, LINE 4—"AND TO A PRIVATE PLACE."

Perhaps the "Virgin Inn" at the corner of Brighthouse Knowe, on the opposite side of Peebles water from the Chapel of the Virgin. The house has been rebuilt, and a tablet inserted into the wall bearing the date, 1736.

PAGE 17, LINE 8—"SAINT BRIDE."

An Irish Virgin. Her festival occurred upon the 1st of February. She was Patron Saint of the House of Douglas. There is a chapel dedicated to her in the Abbey Church of Melrose. And the Parish Church at Traquair is Saint Bride's also.

PAGE 18, LINE 22—"CAPONS."

April 28, 1656.—They (the Council) considering the prejudice and wrong occasioned by the scraping of fowls in the houses and yards, it is enacted and ordained that all those who have hens or capons, put and tie such a weight of timber to the foot of the said fowls as will hinder them from flying, under the pain of four shillings Scots., to be paid by the owner of each fowl going without that clog; as also it shall be lawful to any person who shall find any hen or capon without

clog after intimation hereof, to seize upon the same and dispose thereupon at their pleasure, without reparation to the owner.

PAGE 18, LINE 27—"BREAD."

February 26, 1463.—Which day the good men of the Inquest instituted and ordained that whatever wife broke the weight, given after the price of wheat by the Bailies, of each to be taken two loaves, and dealt thus for the first fault; for the next fault, four loaves be taken for the second fault; for the third fault, of each wanting the weight of the loaf, six loaves to be taken and dealt to poor folk; and whatever she is found with these three faults, shall be closed from baking a year and a day; and right so of all brewing who break the price.

PAGE 19, LINE 29—"DRUNK OF HOME-BREWED ALE
A QUART."

September 30, 1471.—Ale to be sold for tenpence a gallon the best, and eightpence, and better cheap if it be priced by the ale-tasters.

PAGE 19, LINE 38—BLAZING FIRE (FELLOUN FYRE).

This same expression occurs in the Burgh Records of the 15th century.—July 18, 1474.

PAGE 20, LINE 54—"HEATHEN ONE."

Granada conquered from the Moors in 1492.

PAGE 20, LINE 59—"NOW BY THE ROOD."

"Demster in the 13 Book, number 952 of his "Scots Ecclesiastical History," relates that during the

rage of the Persecution of Maximianus through Britain, Saint Nicolas of the Order of the Culdees, Bishop, suffered martyrdom, and that in these words :—

“Saint Nicolas, Culdee, and one of the first bishops of the Church of Scotland, suffering martyrdom the time of Maximian’s hot persecution in Brittain, the holy reliques of his body cut asunder in bitts or collops and pieces laid up in a shrine of stone, and, together with a certain venerable cross, hidden in the earth, and afterwards digged up again, deserved veneration by this inscription that was therein, ‘The Place of Saint Nicolaus, Bishop,’ upon which King Alexander III., at the request of the Bishop of Glasgow, did build a magnificent church at Peebles; which, while the piety of our ancestors continued, was famous by the glory of its miracles, and repaired to by a wonderful confluence of people. This bishop was martyred in the year 296. His sacred body, known by the inscription, was found, and with the cross raised and exalted 7th May Anno 1262, which was the 13th year of King Alexander III., as is to be seen at great length in the book 14, chap. 16.”

The above is extracted from “Pennycook’s History of Tweeddale,” p. 275, in which he states it to be a translation of one of two documents in Latin, written by Mr Andrew Watson, vicar of Peebles, in the library of St John’s College, Cambridge, Dec. 17, 1640, and translated by Mr John Frank.

PAGE 20, LINE 46—“A TRAVELLED CLERK AND
WORLDLY PRIEST.”

1478, February 15.—The Dean of Peebles, on behalf of Sir William Gibson, chaplain of the Rood Altar in Saint Andrew’s Church, sought leave of absence from the Bailies for the said Sir William for the space of four years because he intended and purposed travelling in other countries to schools.”

PAGE 28, LINE 115—"WHY BAIRNS OF BURGESSES."

Notes anent Burgesses taken from the Charters and Burgh Records of Peebles.

1451-2, February 5, Edinburgh. James II. confirmed by a charter the rights of the inhabitants which they had anciently enjoyed, including creation of burgesses.

1506, July 24, Edinburgh.—James IV. confirms the right of creating burgesses.

1621, November 19, Newmarket. James VI. confirms above right.

1641, November 17. Act of Parliament confirming above right.

Burgesses Admitted.—1456, November 2. That same day was made Burgess Will of the Ost, and pay for his freedom 40 shillings at the Bailies' will.

That same day was made Burgess Lori Lauson, and shall pay for his freedom as a burgess heir.

That same day was made Burgess Dick Patonson, and shall pay for his freedom half-a-mark.

1456, November 15. That same day was made Burgess Tom Fyldar, and shall pay for his freedom 10 shillings at 2 terms—that is to say Beltane the one half and Bartylmas the other half.

1456, January 17.—That same day was made Burgess Tom Harlowbank, and shall pay for his freedom 20 shillings. . . . and Tom Dickson is pledged for "Scotting, lotting, waking, warding, and burgh taxes paying."

1457, January 30.—That same day was made burgess, Sandy Cant, and shall pay for his freedom 10 shillings, and of that is allowed for his riding to

the army 5 shillings. That same day was made burgess, Patrick Dickson, and the burgess-silver was allowed to his old father.

1458, June 5.—That same day was made burgess, Will Carwor, and shall espouse his woman within a month, under the pain of five marks.

1458, October 16.—That same day was made burgess, John Murchison, and shall pay for his freedom 5 nobles 40 shillings.

1459, October 29.—That same day was made burgess, Meg Wodhal, and shall make for her freedom a rood of causeway.

1461, November 16.—That same day was made burgess, James of Newton, and his burgess-silver given Meg Henryson in her dowry for the love of God.

1462, October 11.—That same day was made burgess, Cuthbert Dickson, and his burgess-silver given him for his wife's sake.

1462, November 22.—That same day was made burgess, James of Loche, and given his freedom quit for his fee of his sergeantship.

1462, March 15.—Was made burgess, John Scott, and has paid for his freedom, a bow and a sheaf (of arrows) to the town. Two others also do the same at this time.

1464, April 23.—That same day was given the freedom to Peronelle, and she shall pay therefor 30 shillings.

1464, June.—Thomas Henryson shall pay for his freedom 30 shillings, and that is given to the making of the butts.

1464, December 10.—John Wilson, his burgess-

silver given for the love of God to John Clerk, his old father.

1470, May 14.—The freedom to Bessie Woodman, by the request of Friar John Blenk, master of the Cross Kirk.

1470, February 26.—Made burgess, Cuthbert Glassyng, and his freedom given quit *pro Deo* to his wife, with all consent of the whole Court.

1472, April 20.—Made burgess, John Nicoll, and his freedom given to John Murchison, Abbot of Unrest, in that time.

1472, August 17.—Made burgess, John Godisbarn, and he has paid for his freedom in the price of a kist, 10 shillings.

1473, November 15.—Made burgess, Will Patonson, and his freedom given free for the marriage of his wife.

1475, October 16.—Made burgess, Robert Dickson, and his freedom given *pro Deo* to Marion Lawson in the marriage of her daughter.

1475, November 13.—Made burgess, Wat Fyldar, and shall give to the supply of the bridge-work the obtaining of 8 score loads of stones, and no carriage of them.

1476, May 6.—Made burgess, Thomas Young, mason, and shall pay for his freedom 5 shillings in work or silver at the town's will.

1484, May 16.—Made burgess, Thomas Bychat, of Castlehill, and for his burgess silver he shall make a butt at the north end of the town.

1488, May 8.—John Veitch, 100 loads of stones at Bridgend for his freedom ; also, Adam Smith, 2 trees given to the Bridge at the Tolbooth end, and 5 shillings.

■

John Cant and Simon Forstar, each 4 score loads of stones to the building of the Newark.

William Tweedie, a chalder of lime to the Steeple building.

Adam Fyldar, 8 shillings worth of iron work to the said steeple.

David Lowgh, 5 shillings worth of work to the said Steeple building.

1493, April 16.—Made burgess, John Nisbet, and his burgess-silver given to Thomas Boyle for his drink-silver to the Newark.

1494, April 7.—Made burgess, John Drawar for 10 shillings for the thatching of the steeple.

1494, October 6.—Made burgess, Thomas Groseyr for 10 shillings given to the apparelling of the Rood Altar in the High Kirk.

1496, April 28.—Oswald Aiken pays 10 shillings to the community of Peebles at the Feast of the finding of the Holy Cross.

Andrew Patrikson pays 10 shillings for the glazing of the west window of the Chapel.

Robert Mathison pays 10 shillings towards a surplice for Saint Andrew's Kirk.

1496, March 2.—George Murray pays 10 shillings for oil to the clock.

1497, April 15.—Patrick Clerk gives 12 shillings towards building Venlaw dyke.

1555, May 6.—Robert Murray pays his burgess money to Robin Hood.

Burgesses were compelled to dwell within the town. Ordinances to this effect are numerous in the Burgh Records :—

1459, July 23.—John Murchison was fined 10

shillings, with 40 shillings caution, to come and live in town by Michaelmas.

1464, December 10.—Another ordinance in the same tenor.

1555, April 22.—Several outland burgesses are warned that unless they come to live in the town, they will be discharged.

1555, October 15.—Order and penalty repeated. No burgess was to be made unless in full Court.—1466, October 6.

The burgess-fee was not to include the fee for the privilege of erecting a stall (stallach silver).—1473, November 5.

The Inquest ordained that no burgess was to be made without advice of the Council.—1555, January 20.

Qualifications of Burgesses.—(1), Must be indwellers and inhabitors within the town; (2), must make residence therein day and night; (3), that their qualification and conversation concerning the commonweal be well known; (4), that they take part with the town in common affairs; (5), if they remove from the town after creation, that they be deprived.

1563, March 9.—The Council ordains that all those persons who have offended the bailies in complaining to outland men to make party against their aldermen, contrary to their act of creation, be called next court; and if they by any neighbour be convicted, that he be punished in example of others, and that he forfeit his freedom.

1567, January 28.—The most part of our Council of the burgh of Peebles, convened in the

Tolbooth of Peebles, instituted and ordained that in all time coming that there be not permitted any unfreeman to occupy a freeman's craft within the liberty of the town of Peebles; and if there be apprehended any unfreemen occupying a freeman's craft, that the officers of the burgh for the time shall escheat their work-looms that they work with, and likewise the stuff in their hands to be escheated; and the second fault, punishing of their bodies at the bailies' and Council's will; and the third fault, to be reputed and holden as disobeyers of authority; and also ordains to be warned all the unfreemen in the town to come and buy their freedom between this and the 6th of March next, which, if they fail to certify themselves, that this present Act shall be put in execution against them; and that the bailies make no unfreemen's sons burgesses under the sum of 40 shillings.

Marrying the Heiress of a Burgess.—If a man married the heiress of a burgess, a modified fee was payable instead of the fixed rate of 40 shillings, *e.g.*—

1606, November 7.—William Elliot gave in his bill to be admitted a burgess, and because he had married a burgess's heiress, ordains him to pay to the treasurer 33s 4d, with the banquet as is customary; and all that shall be admitted hereafter that marries the heiress of a burgess to do the like.

The Burgess' Oath.—"Here I protest before God and your worships that I profess and allow with my heart the true religion which is at present publicly preached within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof. I shall abide thereat and defend the same to my life's end, forsaking the Roman religion called papistry. I shall be loyal and true

to our Sovereign Lord the King's Majesty and his successors, to the Provost and Bailies of this burgh. I shall keep and underlie the statutes of this burgh. I shall obey the officers of this burgh, gratify and maintain them in the execution of their offices with my body and lands. I shall not colour unfreemen's goods under colour of my own. I shall not purchase lordships nor authority contrary to the freedom of this burgh. In all taxations, warding and watching, and all other burdens to be laid upon this burgh, I shall willingly bear my part as commanded by the Magistrates, and shall not use nor purchase any exemptions or privileges to be free thereof, renouncing the benefit of the same for ever. And, finally, I shall not attempt nor do anything hurtful to the liberties and common-weal of the said burgh; and so often as I break any point of this, my oath, I oblige myself to pay to the common good of the said burgh the sum of £100, and shall enter and remain in ward until the same is paid. (Court-Book, 1623; Gleanings, p. 14.)

Causeway Burgesses.—Had no part in the hills; probably were not possessed of a house in the burgh; had no right of pasture on the Commons.

1610, November 23.—The Council all in one voice concludes that none be made burgesses unless they shall give their burgess-silver to make causeway, and make so many roods as the Council shall direct them.

Query—Is this the origin of the term "Causeway Burgess?"

1624, June 9.—Sir Archibald Murray of Darnhall, knight, is created a Causeway Burgess.

1653, April 29.—The Council declares James Stevenson in Haystoun is only a "Causeway" Burgess until he find caution to "Scot, lot, watch, and ward" as other burgesses.

Usurping the Style of a Burgess.—1676, June 5.—Fines George Forbes 3 pounds for usurping the style of a burgess of this burgh—he not being so.

Burgess Ticket ordered to be Torn.—1691, October 7.—They find that thereby the said Thomas Caitchen for his not obeying magistrates, and laying violence on the Bailie has forfeited his burgesship, and therefore ordains the Clerk to escheat it and deliver it to the officer to be torn at the Cross by tuck of drum, and ordains the clerk to draw up the causes wherefore it is done, and to lie in prison during the magistrates' pleasure.

Burgess Expelled.—1652, July 19.—The haill Council taking in consideration that the said Patrick Veitch was suspended from his office of clerkship for giving sasine to my Lord Yester of the Venlaw without acquainting the town whereunto he was bound in duty therefore for his farther censure discharges him of his freedom, and declares he has no power to exercise any freedom as a burgess of this burgh.

Payments by Burgesses.—1684, February 5.—The Council considering the great prejudice that occurs to the old burgesses of the town through admitting burgesses and Guild brethren too easily, have therefore thought fit to enact that no burgess or

Guild brethren in time coming be admitted under the compositions following, viz. :—

A burghess' heir in his father's lifetime, 5 marks to the town box and 5 marks to the Dean of Guild box, and a dinner to the Town Council at his burghess admission, and another to the Guildry Council at his Guild brother admission; and after his father's death, 33s 4d to each box.

A burghess' second son and the rest of his sons, 5 marks to the town box and 5 to the Guildry.

Those that make marriages with burghesses' daughters, 10 marks to each box.

Those that serve apprentice to any merchant or other freeman, and gets a discharge of his indentures, 5 marks to each box.

Those that are neither burghess' sons, nor marry burghess' daughters, not to be admitted under 20 pounds to each box.

Reserving power to the Magistrates and Council and to the Dean of Guild, and his Council to impose what they think reasonable above this Act, according to their quality that seeks their freedom; and it is hereby enacted that none shall be admitted burghess or Guild brothers without a dinner to the Magistrates and Council at either admission.

Inventory of the Effects of a Burgess, 1606:—

	£	s.	d.
A young horse, - - - - -	16		
A stand-bed, with bolsters, slips, sheets, coverings, blankets, - - - - -	10		
The habiliments of his body, viz. :—Cloke, coat, breeches, hose, shoes, gaiters, belt, ruff, bonnet, night-bonnet, mutch, napkin, and doublet, - - - - -	10		
A counter-board, a broad-cloth, a dozen of serviettes, ten trenchers, a dozen plates, a dozen spoons, a pint chopin, a quart, a salt fat (dish), a knife, a cup, - - - - -	4		
A water-cloth, a basin, a table, a vessel cup-board (almry), - - - - -	40		
A wheel, - - - - -	18		

	£	s.	d.
A pair of stock cards, a pair of wool cards, -		12	
A pot, - - - - -	4		
A pan, - - - - -		30	
A pair of clips (for lifting a pot), - -		3	
A cruik (chain for hanging pots), - -		12	
A stand or dry ware, - - - - -		8	
A meal ark, a tub, - - - - -		10	
A graip, a foot spade, a peat spade, -		6	8
A led saddle, a car saddle, - - - -		26	
A pair of "cheitts," - - - - -			
A sled, a pair of fuel creels, a pair of muck creels, a pair of coal creels, - -		30	
A pair of branks, with halter and tether, -		4	
A barrow and a barrel, - - - - -		8	
A whinger, a sword; a cow and calf, -			

Inventory of Provost Williamson, December 27, 1651:—

A long fir table, with a whole bench and a broken bench, - - - - -	6	
An ash table, with 2 benches, - - - -	50	
3 fir beds; 2 at 50s each, the other fixed and standing still; an old oak ark, broken, nothing worth but for the fire, except 2 iron bands thereon, - - - - -	50	
An old great ash chest, - - - - -	24	
A fir chest, - - - - -	4	
A candle chest, without locks or bands, -	8	
A Flanders fir chest, - - - - -	6	
A Scots fir chest, - - - - -	40	
Another old fir chest, - - - - -	3	
A 4-gallon barrel, - - - - -	12	
2 little barrels, - - - - -	16	
2 ale bottles at 16s each, - - - - -	32	
2 ale stands, - - - - -	26	
A brewing vessel, unseasoned, - - - -	20	
2 flesh stands, - - - - -	32	
A meal vessel, unseasoned, - - - - -	20	
A brewing vessel, - - - - -	3	
A knocking trough, - - - - -	30	
A timber bed, - - - - -	6	

	£	s.	d.
A wainscot table, with 2 benches, - - -	7		
A bed, with a bound wainscot head, - -	4		
2 old meat cupboards, - - - -	10		
A vessel cupboard, - - - -	16		
A fir chest, - - - -	13	4	
2 timber chairs, - - - -	17	4	
A large brass pot, weighing $1\frac{1}{4}$ stone, at 5s per lb.; 2 little brass pots, weighing both 1 stone weight, at 5s per lb.			
An old iron pot, - - - -	24		
A large pan, - - - -	12		
2 little pans, each 12s, - - - -	24		
Iron furniture, as spits, and irons, chains, clips, tongs, graips, flesh crook, the iron fittings of a plough, weighing in all $4\frac{1}{2}$ stones, at 50s the stone.			
Pewter furniture, as stoups, plates, trenchers, saucers, tankards, and salt dishes, &c., weighing 2 stones 15 lbs., at 9s per lb.			
3 brass chandeliers, - - - -	3	10	
An old caldron, weighing 9 quarter-weight, at 9s per lb.			
2 fir chests, - - - -	23	4	
A cheese board, - - - -	13	4	
12 boards, at 13s 4d per piece.			
3 timber beds, - - - -	8		
A table with 2 benches, - - - -	4		
An old press, - - - -	36		
A little iron chimney brace, - - - -	20		
A plough and the 2 horse tires, - - - -	40		
2 sleds, - - - -	36		
2 harrows, - - - -	26		
A pair of muck creels, - - - -	2		
An old riding saddle, - - - -	30		
A load saddle, - - - -	8		
A foot spade, - - - -	4		
A broken peat spade, - - - -	2		
A malt shovel, - - - -	2		
An old window cloth, - - - -	10		
A timber ladle, - - - -	2	6	

	£	s.	d.
3 washing tubs, - - - -	20		
A riddle, - - - -	2		
A meal sieve, - - - -	10		
A wool wheel, - - - -	20		
A lint wheel, - - - -	40		
A milk sieve, - - - -	12		
11 great and small cut ash trees, the rest reserved for the pupils' house in North-gate, - - - -	8		
A half-sawn tree, - - - -	3		
3 stand-green curtains, 5 merks.			
6 feather beds, - - - -	25	13	4
6 feather bolsters, - - - -	14		
7 feather pillows, - - - -	3	10	
5 chaff beds, - - - -	1		
3 chaff bolsters, - - - -	18		
4 sewed coverings, - - - -	14		
2 new double woven lined coverings, - - - -	14		
8 single woven coverings, - - - -	17	11	8
3 pairs new blankets, - - - -	12		
8 pairs old worn blankets, - - - -	4		
6 new cushions, - - - -	4		
4 old cushions, - - - -	6		
12 pairs linen sheets, - - - -	15	10	
11 pairs hardine sheets, - - - -	12	12	
7 pillow slips, - - - -	3		
3 dornik board cloths, - - - -	2	17	4
5 linen board cloths, - - - -	3	8	8
34 linen and dornik serviettes, at 4s each.			
One linen dornik cloth, - - - -	6		
	<hr/>		
	£339	2	8

PAGE 23, LINE 32—"THE THIRD HEIR."

On a playing-card—one of a pack of the date of the Restoration—occurs the following couplet:—

"Of piles of wealth raised by unjust extortion,
The third heir seldom doth enjoy a portion."

PAGE 29, LINE 130—"THIS BONNIE PEDLAR."

The following poem, printed at St. Andrews by Robert Lekprevik, gives an account of the itinerant merchants in Scotland in the 16th century :—

We silly puir anes, where we were won't to gang
With codes and cockles, with fish and sick-like ware
Upon our backs, as meikle as we nicht fang
With merry sang, all tripping into pairs
To win our living in mercat, at sic fairs ;
Now we, alas, but ruth, are reft with thief.

Nae other life we puir men bade of better,
Nor with oor naigs to gane to Edinburgh toon,
With peats, with turfs, and mony turse of heather,
Ay gat gude sale ; syne late, when we were done,
For merriness, and with light of moon,
We wad gae hame, but other fray or chace,
Where now in sorrow fra door to door we clune,
Blaming thy treason for a' oor care, alas !

We colliers, cadgers, and carters in ane rout,
By bloody wolves that Grange has made to steir ;
Our horse is reft, our selves are dung with doubt ;
Where we did travel we dare not now appear ;
Out of our lodge we take of them sic fear,
Though it wood us ten thousand crowns advance,
With morning prayer we curse them, made this war,
Blaming thy treason, the cause of our mischance.

Alas, we chapmen may with creel-men mourn
Thae silly men that brought their butter and eggs
To Edinburgh Cross, and did nae other turn ;
And we again wood buy ane pack of fegs,
Baith preens and needles, and sell to landward Megs.
Then might we travel where we dare not this day,
But lie at home, without meat, no drink but dregs,
Blaming thy treason, the cause of all our fray.

What wight in life will not us poor pity,
That wont to bring the wool, the skin and hide,

To Edinburgh town in peace and charity,
 From Selkirk, Hawick, and the parts of Clyde?
 Where now, alas! in hole and boll we bide;
 As wretches weary the coronach we carp,
 Dare not keek out for rebels that do ride,
 Blaming thy treason for this our sorrow sharp!

PAGE 29, LINE 131—"AT EVERY FAIR."

1554, December 17.—Fairs and markets recorded
 in the charter of Mary, Queen of Scots:—

A market day on Tuesday weekly.

Fair day on Saint Bartholomew's day.

„ „ Saints Peter and Paul day, for 8 days.

„ „ Saint Dionysius day, for 8 days.

1621, November 19.—Confirmation by James VI.

Weekly Market Days.

3 Free Fairs thrice a year—

May 3, Beltane day, 48 hours.

June 29, Saint Peter's day, 48 hours.

August 24, Saint Bartholomew, 8 days

1696, June 22.—To avoid profanation of the Sunday
 when a fair fell upon a Saturday or a Monday, the
 Magistrates changed the following fair days:—

Beltane to 1st Wednesday of May.

Trinity „ Tuesday of June.

Saint Peters' to last Tuesday of June.

Saint Bartholomew last Tuesday of August.

Saint Dionysius 2nd Tuesday of October.

Saint Andrew's last Tuesday of November.

Fastingseven as formerly.

And the Magistrates declare that whosoever shall
 bring horses, nowts, or sheep to any of those Fairs,
 shall be custom free for the same for the space of
 nine years, except for sheep at Saint Peter's Day,
 and nowt at Saint Dionysius' Day; and declare the

horse-market to be at the North Port; and the sheep and nowt upon Tweed Green and the King's Muir.

PAGE 35, LINE 232—"THEY HAD A JACK."

The wapinschaw, or weapon show, held at Peebles at this date gives an idea of the military equipment of the period :—

1572, May 19—John Wightman, younger, armed; John Edmund, 1 spear, 1 sword; James Cokkare, 1 lance 1 staff; John Lawson, 1 short spear; Dennis Bell; John Shanks, a spear, bonnet, staff; Andrew Eumond, spear, bonnet, staff; John Geddes, spear, bonnet, staff, sword; John Stirling, spear, staff; Peter Shiell, spear, staff; Arthur Ecford, staff, sword; William Eumond, spear; Thomas Eumund, sword; John Wilton, bow, bag, spear; James Thorburn, 2 spears, 2 staffs, bonnet, sword; William Kello, spear, staff, bonnet, sword; John Wylie, spear, sword; Gilbert Anderson, a broken spear, a staff; John Wilson, spear, staff; Thomas, 1 spear, 2 staffs, 1 bonnet, 2 swords; Thomas Porteous, 2 staffs, bonnet, sword.

And so on throughout the list, the remainder producing similar weapons, with these exceptions :—Andrew Alexander, a gowne; John Stevenson, a hackbut; Gavin Charteris, a gun; David Robertson, an axe; David Eckford, 3 forks; Wm. Richardson, a buckler; James Dowell, 2 bows.

1624, August 20.—There exists an account of a wapinschaw half-a-century later, held in the Crosskirk Yaird of Peebles, of which the following is a specimen of the muster roll :—

1624, Aug. 10—Alexander Horsburgh, a sword, lance, and steel bonnet; Patrick Thomson, a sword, but who is ordained to have a jack and a steel bonnet; James Grieve, outlawed for wanting armour except a sword; John Plenderleith, a sword, ordained to have a lance, a steel bonnet, a pair

of pistols, and a hagbut ; John Brown, ordained to have a steel bonnet and a whinger ; Archibald Frank, ordained to have a "buffil coat ;" etc.

A jack is a jacket or jerkin, probably of leather. A hagbut is a kind of fire-arm. From the fact of no fire-arm being mentioned in the tales, one might infer the antiquity of the poem.

PAGE 39, LINE 298—"A PER SE."

This expression occurs also in a poem by Dunbar upon London.

PAGE 42, LINE 356—"BUT HE SHALL NEVER GET A KIRK
IF TRUSTS TO LITERATURE."

This sentiment savours also of Dunbar, who was frequently complaining to the King that in preferment, he, an abler priest, was passed over for inferior men.

PAGE 44, LINE 384—"SAINT MARTIN.."

The eleventh altar in the Parish Church of Peebles was dedicated to Saint Martin.



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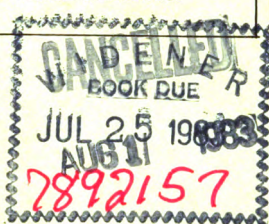
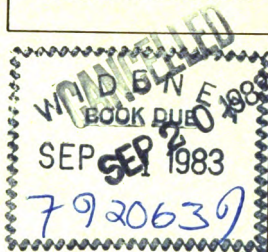
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